Nebraska Mobility Management

Statewide Coordinated Plan

GoNEWhere
MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

Prepared for:

Nebraska Department of Transportation

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Introduction

Purpose and Role of the Coordinated Plan

A coordinated public transit human services transportation plan is required by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the federal transportation bill signed into law in 2012. This act requires states and agencies responsible for the delivery of transportation services to look at the needs and transportation challenges of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low incomes individuals and develop a coordinated plan to address those needs and challenges.

The Federal Transit Law mandates that the projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The Nebraska Statewide Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan is developed and approved through a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public utilizing transportation services.

The Nebraska Statewide Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan (alternatively referred as the Nebraska Plan) is the framework for prioritizing needs within the state. The Nebraska plan includes Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities) federally funded transportation programs in the state of Nebraska.

The key elements of the Nebraska plan include:

- An assessment of needs, gaps and barriers in transportation for individuals with disabilities, older adults and persons with limited income;
- An inventory of existing transportation services that identifies public and private organizations currently involved in serving the needs of transportation disadvantaged population;
- Coordination strategies to address identified gaps in service and for more efficient utilization of resources;
- Mechanisms to prioritize use of resources for implementation of identified coordination strategies, including federal 5310 funds.

The Nebraska Plan is developed as an update to the 2007 Statewide Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for the state of Nebraska. Since the plan is developed on a statewide level, it is based on several stakeholder and public involvement activities conducted across the state. The goal of the Nebraska Plan is to provide a framework for state and local leader organizations and agencies involved in human service transportation and public transit service providers to better coordinate programs and actions in the delivery of services. The objective is to

identify and implement strategies to address identified gaps in services to meet the diverse needs of transportation disadvantaged individuals.

Representatives from the following stakeholder groups participated in the various coordination and public engagement activities:

Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), Public Transit Program

NDOT, Administration

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers

Nebraska Association of County Officials

Nebraska Department of Education

Community Action of Nebraska

Nebraska Health Care Association

Nebraska Public Service Commission

Rural Futures Institute

League of Municipalities

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

Citizens for Improved Transit

Refugee Resettlement Program

Area Agencies on Aging

Mode Shift Omaha

National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), Center for Public Affairs Research

Local public transit providers

Private transportation providers

Local government officials

Human service organizations

Members of the targeted population

Previous Statewide Work

The NDOT has commissioned several studies since 2005 addressing transportation needs and transit service coordination in the state of Nebraska. These studies include:

- Nebraska Rural Transit Needs Study (2005): SRF Consulting Group, Inc. on behalf of the NDOT completed this study in December 2005. The study identified the existing transportation services and unmet transportation needs across the state. At the time, only 75 of the state's 93 counties offered any type of public transit service. As a framework to address future challenges, the study identified five strategical areas: mobility services for rural residents, coordination of services and programs, investment in marketing tools and techniques, improvement in rural transit infrastructure and improvement in overall system performance and operations.

- Statewide Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (2007): In 2007, SRF Consulting Group on behalf of the NDOT developed the plan for the state of Nebraska which included the state of existing socio-demographics, available transportation services, current transportation needs and an action plan for coordination. The action plan included three main priorities for project implementation: strengthening and expansion of coordination efforts among transportation agencies to improve overall services, expansion of transportation options for all users across Nebraska to enhance mobility, and improvement of current operations to maximize the effectiveness of service.

- Statewide Mobility Management Project – Phase 1 Concept Design (2013): In March 2013, URS Corporation and SRF Consulting Group on behalf of the NDOT conducted a study to define and explain the statewide mobility management process in the state of Nebraska. The study highlighted three phases to the process: Phase 1 included market definition and needs, phase 2 included alternative development and screening and phase 3 described the development of pilot project recommendations. The study involved establishing a statewide mobility management committee in the defined regions to provide input for coordination efforts. The concept design concludes with a summary of the proposed concepts that are recommended for advancement to consideration in the pilot phase. The explanation of each concept included the current conditions, opportunities for coordination, constraints and recommendations.

- Assessment of Intercity Bus Services in Nebraska (2014): In July 2014, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research on behalf of the NDOT completed a statewide intercity bus study which included identifying existing intercity bus service, ridership demographics and gaps in service and summarizing the information to develop an action plan to intercity bus needs to

be shared with the transportation community and the public. A statewide marketing plan for public transportation with specific strategies for intercity bus service was one of the action items included in the conclusions.

- Nebraska Statewide Mobility Management Project (2015): In late 2015, the NDOT along with a broad range of agencies, initiated the Mobility Management Project with the goal of improving travel options for residents and visitors of the state. Through this currently ongoing statewide approach to addressing mobility needs, it is anticipated that alternatives that fill in service gaps will be identified and implemented.

FTA Section 5310 Funding Program Linked to the Coordinated Plan

Per the FTA, the Section 5310 capital for elderly and disabled transportation funding program provides formula funding to States for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups and certain public bodies in meeting the transportation needs of elders and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. The funds can be used for such items as: buses, radios and communication equipment, vehicle shelters, wheelchair lifts and restraints, and extended warranties.

Moreover, under MAP-21, the Section 5310 program was modified to include projects eligible under the former Section 5317 New Freedom program, described as capital and operating expenses for new public transportation services and alternatives beyond those required by the ADA, designed to assist individuals with disabilities and seniors.

Prior to the passage of MAP-21, Section 5310 funding was distributed solely to the States for distribution by their Departments of Transportation. MAP-21 created an apportioned sub-allocation of 5310 funding. Formula funds are apportioned directly to the NDOT; for rural, small urban and urban areas, except for the Omaha urban area. Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) get the apportioned sub-allocation for Omaha.

Local, State and Federal Share

For formula funds apportioned to the NDOT, Section 5310 recipients receive 80 percent federal funding for capital purchases of vehicles, which means a 20 percent local match is required.

For Omaha area, MAPA offers Section 5310 funds for capital purchases of vehicles with 80 percent of the cost provided by federal funding. Operations funds can be offered directly to the subrecipient or through third party contracts at a maximum of 50 percent federal funds. Additionally, operations can be capitalized through "capitalized cost of contracting" at the 80/20 capital split.

Local Match

All local match funds for Section 5310 must be provided from sources other than those provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Such sources may include:

- State or local appropriations
- Other non-transportation federal funds that are eligible to be used for transportation, i.e.:
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Medicaid
  - Employment training programs
  - Rehabilitation services
  - Administration on Aging
- Tax revenues
- Private donations
- Revenues for human service contracts
- In-kind donations such as volunteered services, as long as the value of the donations are documented and supported and are a cost that would otherwise be eligible under the program
- Income from contracts to provide human service transportation or other net income generated by social service agencies.

It is important to note that most of the above-mentioned sources of local match would most likely apply to operating assistance. Since, the NDOT limits using 5310 formula funds for capital purchase of vehicle and purchase of service, some of these local match fund sources won't apply. However, the sources' list provides ideas for diversifying the operating assistance generators for any transportation provider.

State Demographics

Nebraska has been a predominantly agricultural state. Nebraska's farms and ranches cover 45.3 million acres or 92 percent of the state's total land area[1]. Based on the Census 2010, Nebraska has a population density of 23.8 people per square mile (8th least densely populated state) despite of being the 15th largest state in land area[2].

As shown in Figure 1, the distribution of Census Designated Places (CDPs) and population density of counties indicate that there are clusters of population throughout the state with most of the clusters along the I-80, US Highway 30 and US Highway 20 corridors. The southeastern part of the state consists of Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas and has substantially more population than the other three quarters. Moreover, more than half of the counties have a population density of less than 10 people per square mile. Hence, providing public transportation in majority of the state involves moving a small number of people over longer distances.

Population Change

Between 1970 and 2000, total state population increased 9 percent, from approximately 1.5 million residents, to a total of approximately 1.7 million. The population increase was faster at 6.7 percent from 2000 to 2010 and based on ACS population estimates for the years 2011-2015, there was an average yearly increase in population by 0.75 percent with the overall increase of 3.8 percent between 2010 and 2015. Figure 2 shows the change in population at the county level. The map shows that the concentrations of highest growth are in clusters of counties around the urbanized areas of Omaha and Lincoln. This is especially apparent in Sarpy county on the south side of Omaha there is also a cluster of growth around Grand Island in Hall county which has recently been established as urban with a population exceeding 50,000. There is also a low growth cluster around Madison, Platte, and Colfax counties and several high growth counties throughout central and western Nebraska. These include Banner, Grant, Logan, and Wheeler counties. While these counties are experiencing high rates of growth, it is important to temper that with the realization that due to the low population in those counties the magnitude of that growth translates to an increase of 100 to 170 people in each of those counties over the course of five years.

Urban/Rural Population Change

Consistent with the trend in United States, the urban population share in Nebraska increased and rural population[3] share decreased from 2000 to 2010. In Nebraska, rural population in 2010 accounted for 46.2 percent of the population as opposed to 53 percent in 2000. Currently, 86 out of

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[1] http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/facts.pdf

[2] US Census 2010, https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/state-area.html

[3] Using FTA's rural area definition of 'areas not designated as urban will be considered rural'. Hence, urban clusters are rural areas.

93 counties in Nebraska have no urban population and about 50 percent of Nebraska's population resides in Omaha and Lincoln Metropolitan areas.

The shift in population between rural and urban areas within Nebraska is shown in Table 1. The table shows that the population in Nebraska has grown more in urban areas than rural areas. It also shows that there is a growing percentage of the population living in urban areas with 53 percent in 2010 compared to 55 percent in 2015.

Table 1. Shift in Urban and Rural Population

	2010		2015		Change
Urban	957,431	53%	1,025,288	55%	67,857
Rural	841,694	47%	844,077	45%	2,383
Total	1,799,125		1,869,365		

Figure 1. Population Densities of Counties and Distribution of Census Designated Places (CDPs)

Source: 2010 US Census

Legend:
- CDP
- **Population Density**
  - 0 - 11
  - 12 - 29
  - 30 - 107
  - 108 - 664
  - 665 - 1575

J:\Maps\9076\mxd\Population Distribution.mxd

Figure 2. Change in county Population 2010 to 2015

Source: 2010 and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates
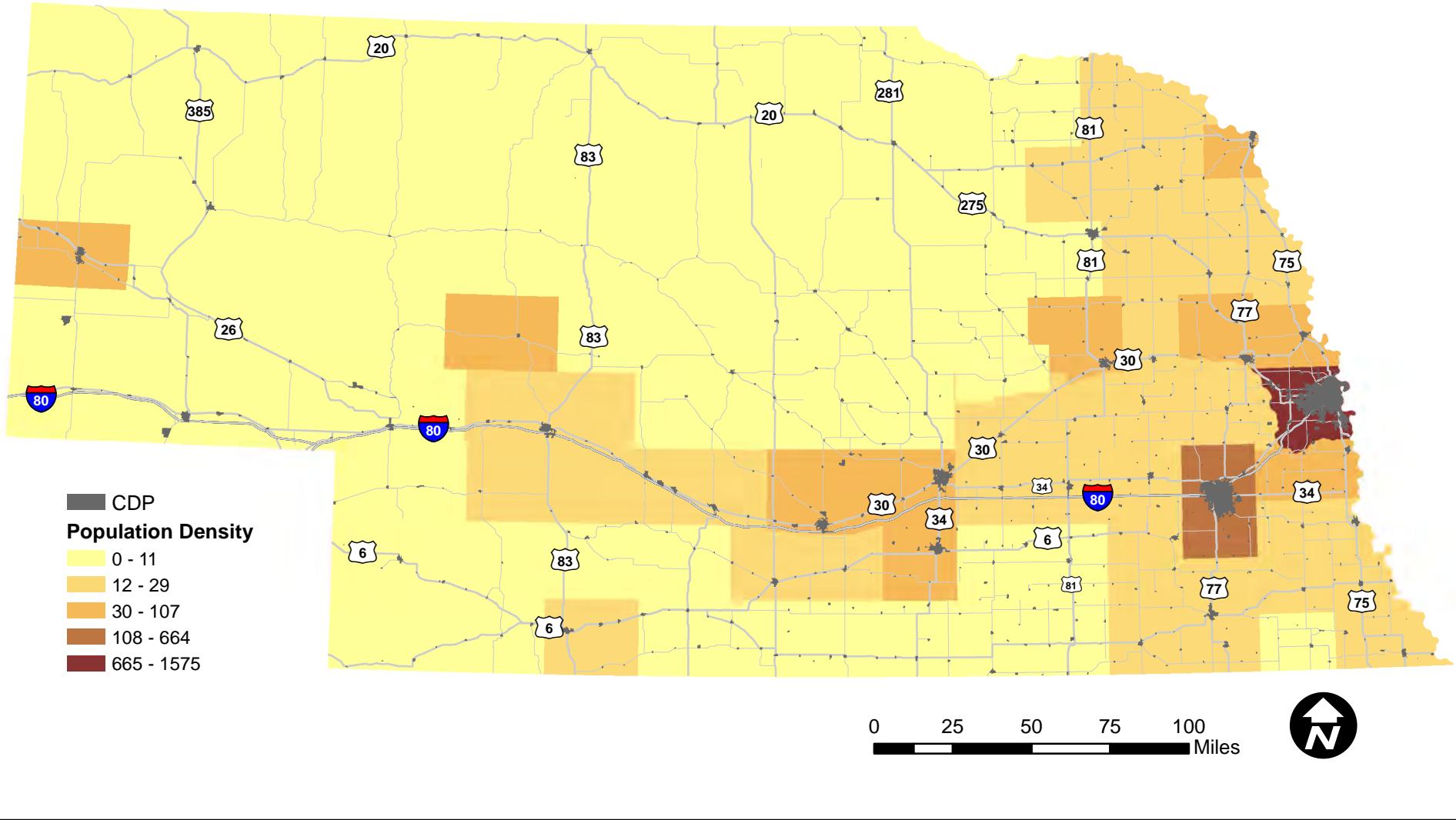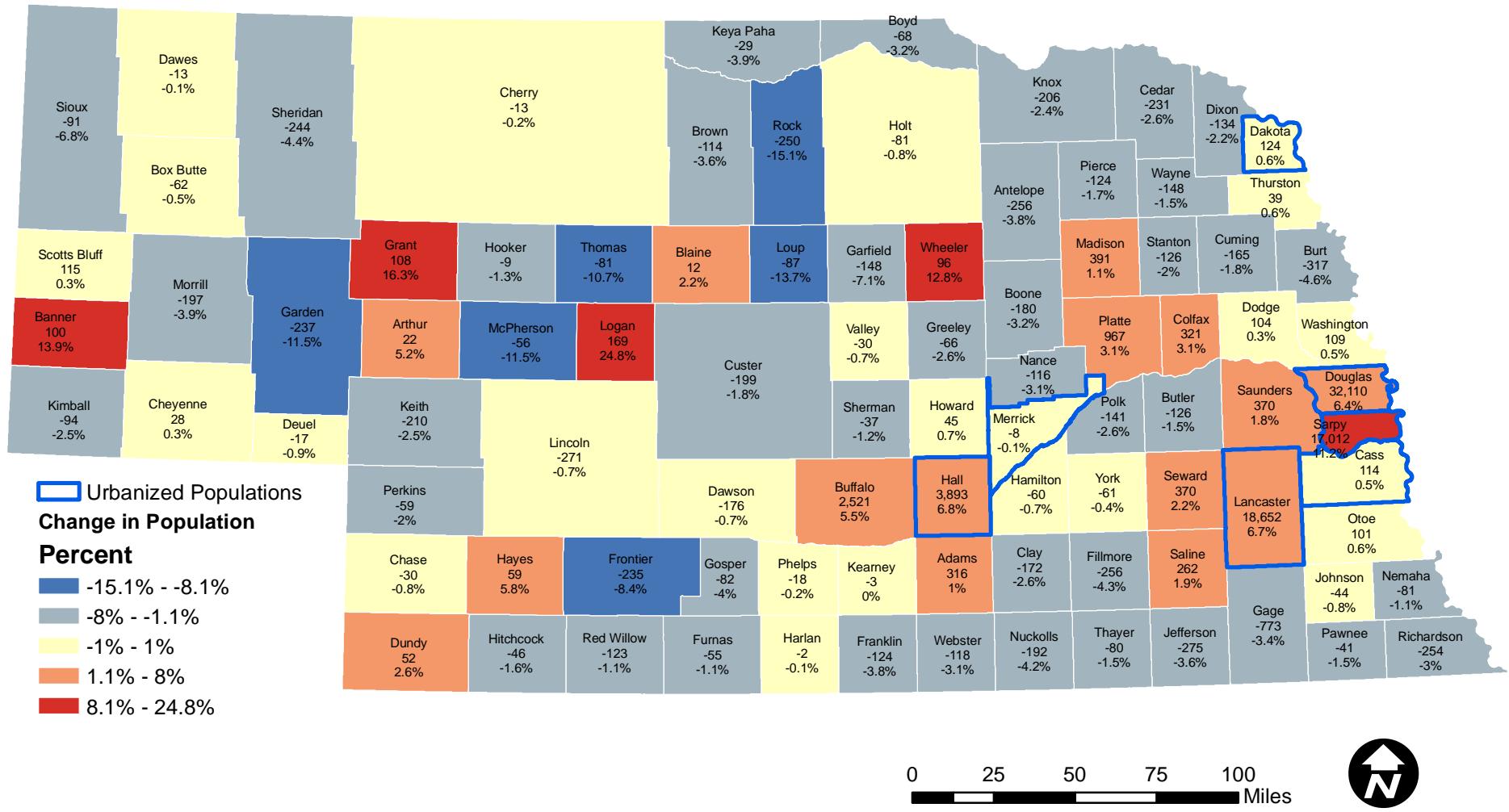
Transportation Disadvantaged Population

Population below Poverty Level

Based on ACS 2015 estimates, 12.7 percent of population had an income below poverty level in 2014 which is lower than national share of 15.5 percent. However, 12 out of the 93 counties had a higher percentage of population below poverty level than the national average. Among all Nebraska counties, Thurston County in northeast Nebraska had the highest percentage of population below poverty. In comparison to the counties with the most percent of families below poverty (based on Census 2000), the top-ranking counties changed based on ACS 2015. Counties like Keya Paha, Rock, Wheeler, Hayes and Thomas had a drop by 50 percent or more in their percentages of families below poverty. However, for Brown, Dakota, Lancaster, Richardson, Stanton counties, there was close to 50 percent increase in their percentages of families below poverty. Only Thurston, Blaine and McPherson counties were both among the top ten highest poverty counties in 2000 and in 2015. Figure 3 shows the distribution of population below poverty level for Nebraska counties.

No Car Households

Based on ACS 2015 estimates, Nebraska has 5.7 percent households with no car which is lower than the national share of 9.1 percent (2015). However, percent households with no car have increased since 2005 (5.1 percent). Among all the Nebraska counties, Thurston County had the highest percent of no car households (10.6 %) while a total of 16 counties had a higher percentage of no car households than the state average. The top ten counties with highest percentage of no car households has not changed much between 2000 and 2015. Figure 4 shows the distribution of zero vehicle population.

Pop Below Poverty Level

- 0% - 8%
- 9% - 11%
- 12% - 14%
- 15% - 19%
- 20% - 30%

Figure 3. Distribution of Population Below Poverty Level

Source: 2015 ACS 5-year estimate

No Vehicle Population

- 0.0% - 1.9%
- 2.0% - 3.5%
- 3.6% - 4.9%
- 5.0% - 6.9%
- 7.0% - 11.0%

Figure 4. Distribution of Zero Vehicle Population

Source: 2015 ACS 5-year estimate
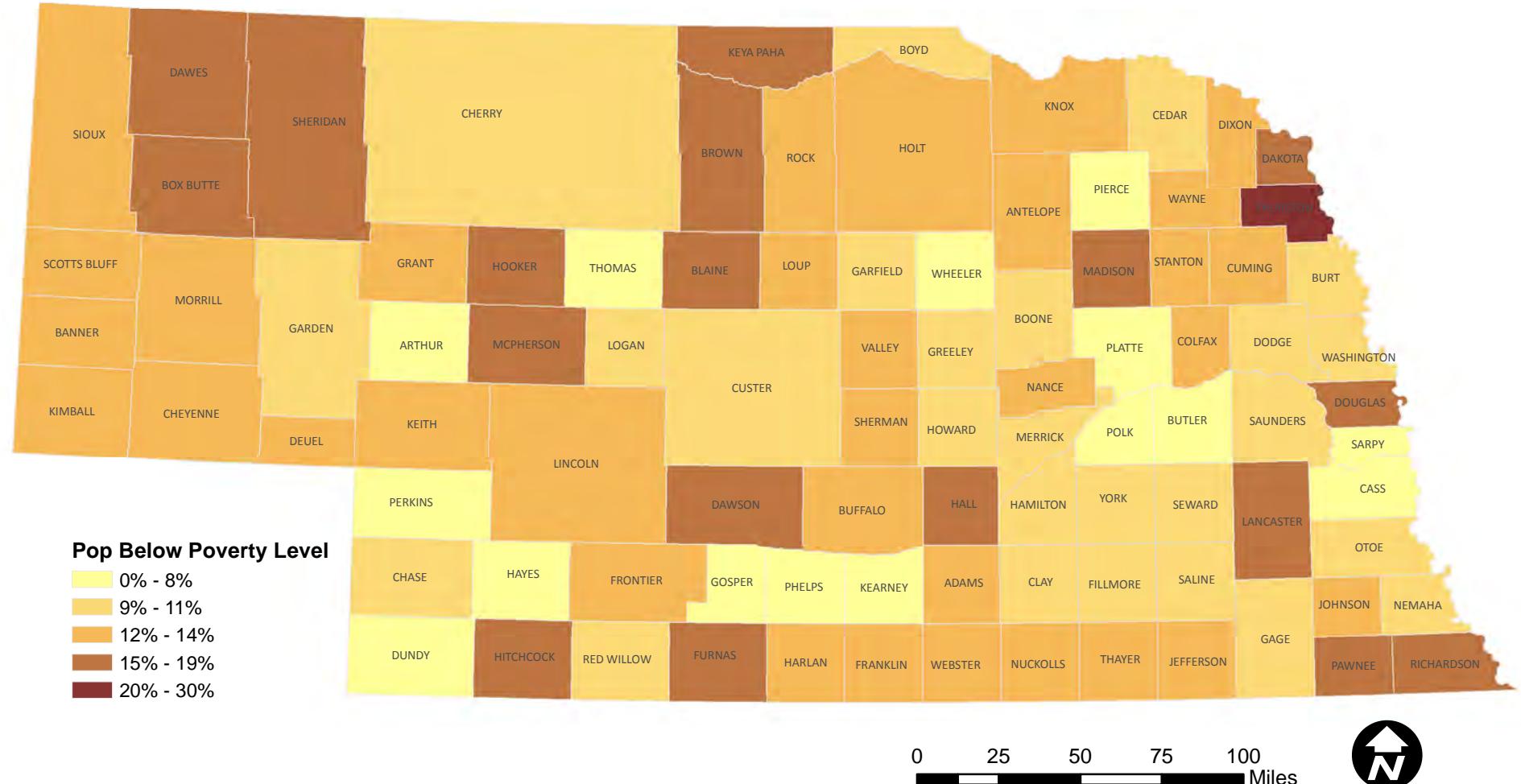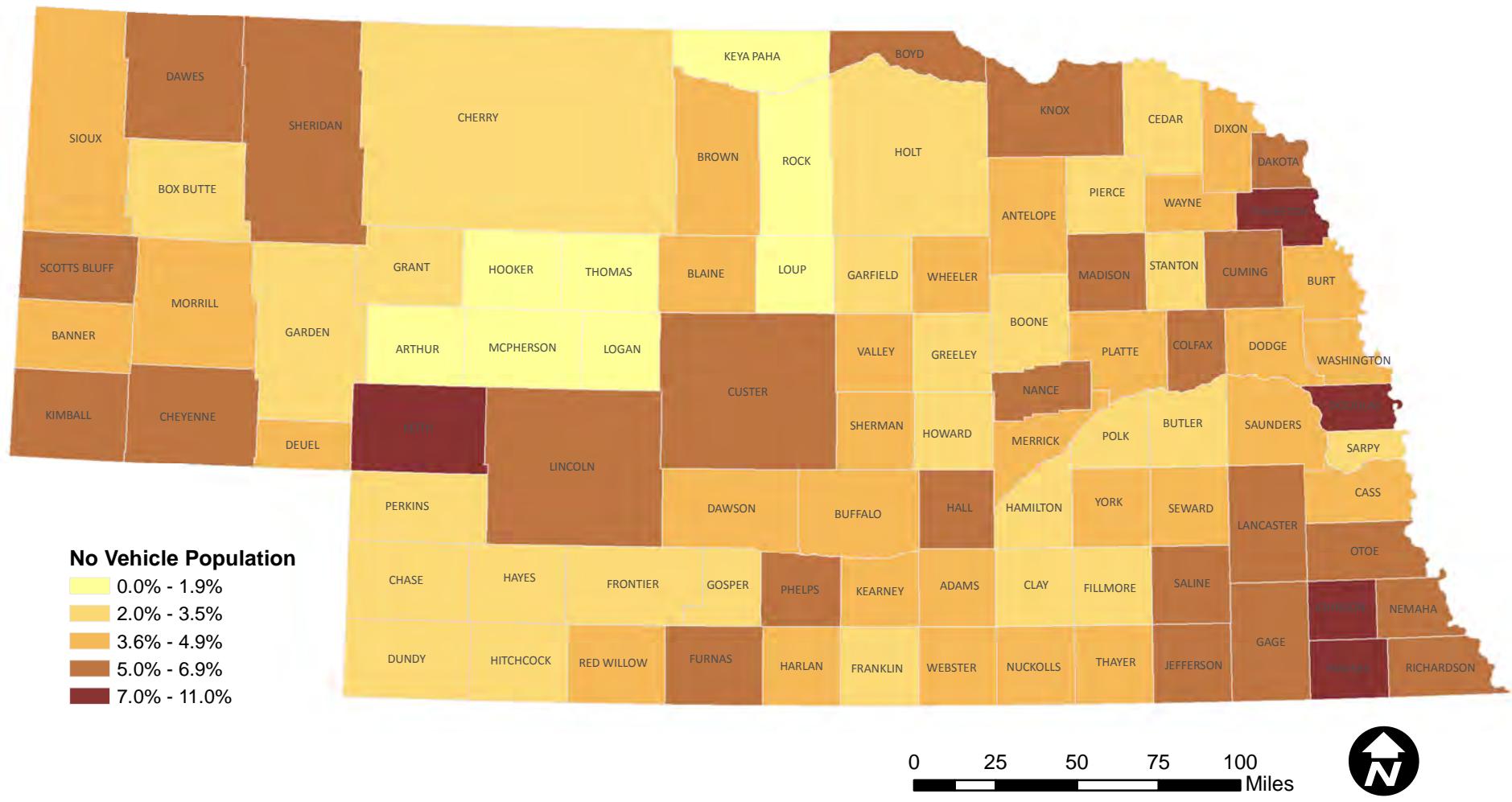
Disabled Population

Based on the ACS 2015 estimates, Nebraska had 11 percent disabled population which is lower than the 12.4 percent share of disabled population in the US. Moreover, 23.4 percent of the 65-74 age group and 47.2 percent of the 75 years and over age group had a disability. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the distribution of disabled population.

Senior Population

Based on Census data, the percentage of elderly population (population 65 years and over) in Nebraska has been consistently higher than the percentage of elderly population in the US for the years 2000 and 2010. Based on ACS 2015, Nebraska has 14.7 percent share of 65 years and over population and 2.2 percent share of 85 years and over population. Moreover, Hooker County had the highest share of 8.3 percent 85 and over population and 26.2 percent 65 and over population. Figure 6 shows the distribution of senior (65 years and older) population in the state of Nebraska.

Based on the US Census for the year 2010, Nebraska has the 28th highest percentage of 65 and over population, 12th highest for 75 and over population and 11th highest for 85 and over population share as compared to other states in the US. The 2012-2015 Nebraska's State Plan for Aging Service[4] developed by Department of Health and Human Services states that Nebraska is likely to have a rapid increase in its senior population until 2030 and a moderate increase between 2030 and 2050. The expected growth rate is 75 percent between 2010 and 2030 and 14 percent between 2030 and 2050.

If the counties were ranked by highest median age, the top ten counties based on Census 2000 did not change much in Census 2010 and still represented a higher median age. Nebraska had a median age of 36.2 years in Census 2010 and 83 counties had a median age of more than 36.2 years. Keya Paha County had the highest median age of 50.7 years.

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[4] Nebraska State Plan on Aging 2012-2015, Department of Health and Human Services, retrieved from:

http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/plan/planning/nebraska-state-plan-on-aging-2012-2015-aarp.pdf

Figure 5. Distribution of Disabled Population

Source: 2015 ACS 5-year estimate
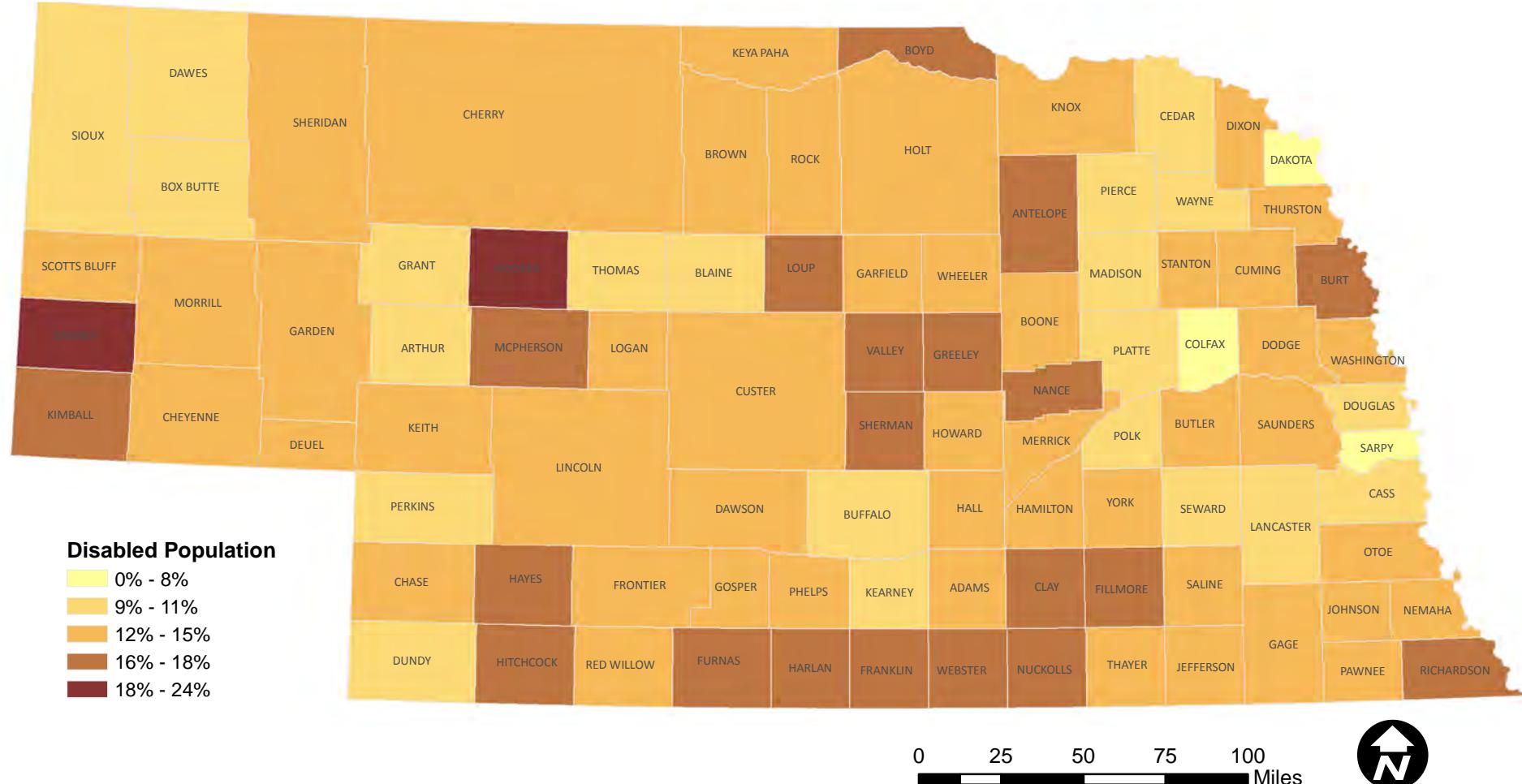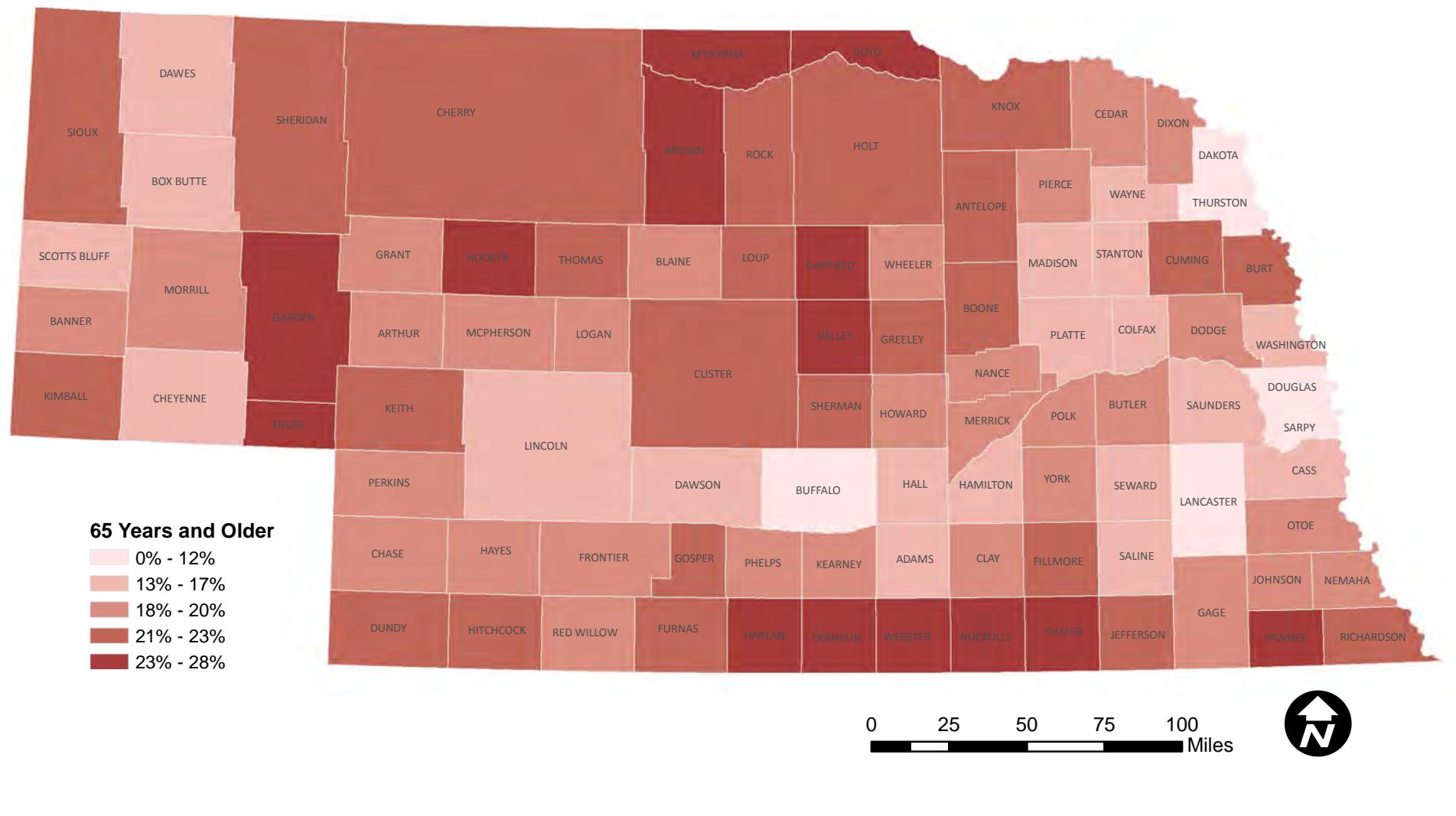
Figure 6. Distribution of Senior (65 Years and Older) Population

Source: 2015 ACS 5-year estimate

Assessment of Existing Services

There is a variety of transportation services available to Nebraskans. They may take advantage of intercity bus service, public transit and non-profit transportation providers. Following is a description of the transportation options available to Nebraskans.

Intercity Bus Service

Intercity transportation in Nebraska is primarily provided by private scheduled bus service. There are ten entities offering scheduled intercity bus service around the state of Nebraska and to neighboring states. These services connect to each other at major cities around Nebraska. Using these services, Nebraskans can travel to most of the more densely populated portions of Nebraska and neighboring states. The service providers are:

- Panhandle Trails serving the Panhandle region of Nebraska. The service provides connections to Alliance, Scottsbluff, Mitchell, Morrill and Kimball in Nebraska; Denver International Airport and Denver Metro area in Colorado; and Cheyenne Airport and Cheyenne Bus Stop in Wyoming.

- Arrow/Black Hills Stage Lines, Inc. providing scheduled bus service between communities in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. The communities served in Nebraska include Columbus, Fremont, Grand Island, Kearney, Lexington, Lincoln, Norfolk, North Bend, North Platte, Ogallala, Omaha (including the Eppley Airport) and Schuyler.

- K & S Express providing scheduled bus service between Norfolk and Chadron along US Highway 275 and 20;

- Burlington Trailways serving Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, Aurora, Kearney, Lexington, North Platte and Ogallala

- Dashabout Shuttle offers scheduled service from the Front Range of Colorado to Omaha, Nebraska with stops along the way. Shuttles originate and terminate at North Platte, Nebraska going east to Omaha or west to Denver.

- Denver Coach provides service connecting western Nebraska (Scottsbluff/ Gering) to south eastern Wyoming and the Colorado front range communities.

- Jefferson Lines provides service from Sioux Falls, SD to Chanute, KS via Omaha and Sioux City, IA along Highway I-29.

- Megabus service connects Lincoln and Omaha, NE with Chicago and Moline in Illinois and Des Moines and Iowa City in Iowa.

- Navigator bus serves Omaha, Kearney, Grand Island, Hastings, Lincoln and Norfolk in Nebraska including transportation to the Eppley Airport in Omaha, Nebraska. Six shuttle trips are available each week between Kearney, Grand Island-Hastings, York, Lincoln and Omaha.
- Omalink provides shuttle service to and from convenient central locations to and from Lincoln or Omaha's aiports on a frequent schedule. Additionally, Omalink also provides town car service for Nebraska and Western Iowa.

Formula 5311 Providers

The NDOT administers the Section 5311 program. This rural areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations.

There are 57 rural transit providers operating with Section 5311 funds. Figure 7 shows the current rural transit service for transit providers operating in the State of Nebraska. Twenty vehicles (out of 277) funded through the 5311 program are located in the metro counties[5].

Formula 5310 Providers

The NDOT has provided 96 organizations with Section 5310 funds for capital purchase. This program provides annual funding to states for the purchase of vehicles and equipment to be used by non-profit organizations and government agencies. Of the 96 organizations participating in the program about 92 percent are located in rural Nebraska counties. Seventy vehicles (out of 188) vehicles funded through the 5310 program are located in the metro counties. Figure 8 shows the distribution of 5310-funded vehicles in Nebraska.

Other Providers

There are a few transportation providers that provide transportation to their clients including some hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, assisted living and independent living institutions. Input from these providers is also sought to identify unmet transit needs.

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[5] The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) designates counties as Metropolitan, Micropolitan, or Neither. A Metro area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, and a Micro area contains an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. All counties that are not part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) are considered rural. After the 2010 Census, the Non-Metro counties contained 46.2 million people, about 15 percent of the total population and covered 72 percent of the land area of the country. Nebraska has 9 metro counties: Cass, Dakota, Dixon, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward and Washington.

Figure 7. Distribution of Vehicles Funded through the 5311 Program

Figure 8. Distribution of Vehicles Funded through the 5310 Program

Map legend:

5310 Vehicles
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 8
- 9 - 14
- 15 - 32

Metro County

Counties labeled on map: SIOUX, DAWES, SHERIDAN, CHERRY, KEYA PAHA, BOYD, KNOX, CEDAR, DIXON, DAKOTA, BOX BUTTE, BROWN, ROCK, HOLT, ANTELOPE, PIERCE, WAYNE, THURSTON, SCOTTS BLUFF, MORRILL, GRANT, HOOKER, THOMAS, BLAINE, LOUP, GARFIELD, WHEELER, MADISON, STANTON, CUMING, BURT, BANNER, GARDEN, ARTHUR, MCPHERSON, LOGAN, VALLEY, GREELEY, BOONE, PLATTE, COLFAX, DODGE, WASHINGTON, KIMBALL, CHEYENNE, DEUEL, KEITH, NANCE, SAUNDERS, DOUGLAS, SARPY, PERKINS, LINCOLN, CUSTER, SHERMAN, HOWARD, MERRICK, POLK, BUTLER, CASS, CHASE, HAYES, FRONTIER, DAWSON, BUFFALO, HALL, HAMILTON, YORK, SEWARD, LANCASTER, OTOE, GOSPER, PHELPS, KEARNEY, CLAY, FILLMORE, SALINE, GAGE, JOHNSON, NEMAHA, DUNDY, HITCHCOCK, RED WILLOW, FURNAS, HARLAN, FRANKLIN, WEBSTER, NUCKOLLS, THAYER, JEFFERSON, PAWNEE, RICHARDSON, ADAMS

J:\Maps\9076mxd\Vehicle Map.mxd

0 25 50 75 100 Miles

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Current Coordination Activities, Transit Needs and Challenges

This section briefly explains the currently ongoing coordination activities and projects that are helping in structuring the coordination process and identifying the transit needs and gaps to devise an action plan for addressing the needs and strategies for coordination.

Existing Coordination Activities

As mentioned in the introduction, in late 2015, the NDOT along with a broad range of agencies, initiated the Mobility Management Project with the goal of improving travel options for residents and visitors of the state.

Statewide Mobility Management Project

The project is focused on improving mobility in rural areas addressing the needs of the elderly, disabled and low-income population which forms most of Nebraska's rural population. Currently, there are 13 counties in the state without any public transportation service and another 13 counties without rural area service. Through this statewide approach to addressing mobility needs, it is anticipated that alternatives that fill in service gaps can be identified and implemented.

Region Development

A central element of the project is investigation of the benefits and feasibility of organizing travel management into six regions across the state. Creating regions has usefulness in both the stage of conducting the present project by creating more manageable areas over which needs will be defined, alternative improvement strategies will be defined and evaluated, and potential changes to services and oversight of the services will be documented. Following completion of this project, the regional concept can provide a structure for implementation and on-going management. For the project, the team has organized the state into the six regions displayed in Figure 9. These regions take into account the boundaries of the current multicounty transportation agencies and the general service areas of county and community-based transit agencies.

Region
- Panhandle
- Southwest
- North Central
- South Central
- Northeast
- Southeast

Figure 9. Statewide Transit Regions
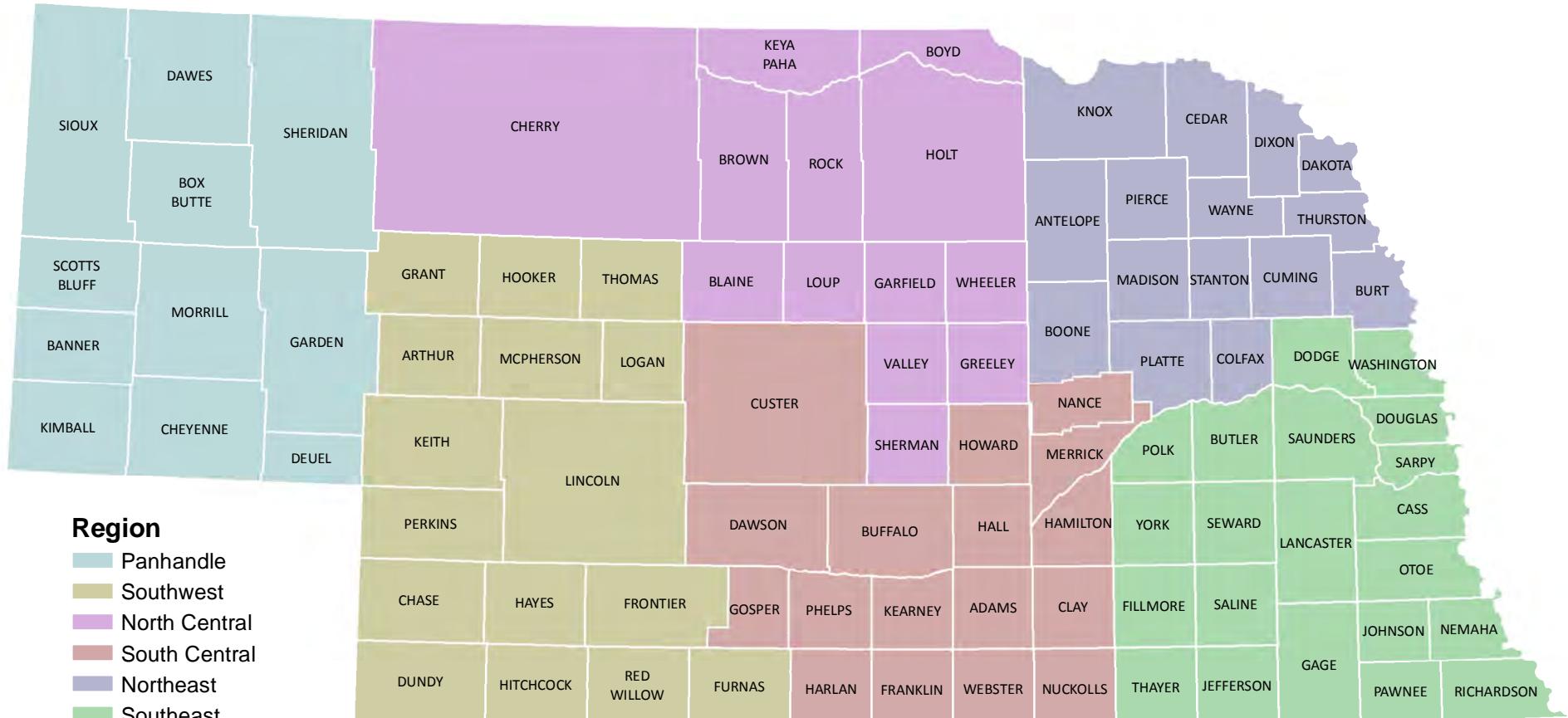
Coordination Committees

To provide an organizational structure to the coordination process, coordination committees were formed at state and regional level. The representatives of each committee have met or will be meeting periodically throughout the length of the project.

Statewide Committee

The statewide committee was scheduled to meet 5 times over the course of the project (4 meetings have already occurred) to provide input for coordination activities and keep others informed of programs and funding. The members of the committee included representatives from:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Veterans Administration
- Area Department of Aging and Elder Services
- Public Service Commission
- Department of Economic Development
- Community Action Nebraska
- Easter Seals
- University of Nebraska
- Office of Refugee Resettlement
- Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Rural Futures Institute
- Citizens for Improved Transit
- Nebraska Department of Transportation

Regional Committees

Eighteen regional committee meetings occurred over a period of 8-12 months which brought unmet service needs and unserved areas into coordination discussions and created means of continuing regional coordination of transportation. The members of the committees included representatives from:

- 5311 Provider Representative (s)
- 5310 Provider Representative (s)
- 5307 Provider Representative (s)
- Rideshare Programs Representative
- Private Company Representative (Cab-Rideshare Companies)
- County Veterans Service Officers
- Intercity Carrier Representative
- Community Stakeholders

Public Engagement and Community Involvement

Eight public information meetings were held throughout the state to gather public input on the mobility management strategies and further identify local transit needs.

Survey of Transportation Providers

Three surveys were conducted to gauge the state of public transportation in rural Nebraska. The objective of the surveys was to understand the existing conditions of transit services and coordination efforts as well as to gather feedback on needed coordination efforts.

- Survey 1: Survey of rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5311 and 5310 program.
- Survey 2: Survey of county and municipality officials in rural Nebraska.
- Survey 3: Survey of rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5310 program, Nebraska's Agencies on Aging, nursing home transportation services funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and transportation providers for disabled population in Nebraska.

Survey 1

Objective

To gather input for identifying opportunities for enhancing coordination between agencies/providers with the goal of improving the cost effectiveness of the service.

Survey population and Outreach

Rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5311 program and FTA's 5310 program subrecipients in the state of Nebraska (majority of subrecipients are private non-profit organizations). On February 10th, 2016, fifty-eight rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5311 program and sixty-five 5310 funds sub-recipients were invited via email to participate in the survey.

Timeline and Response Rate

The survey was open February 10th through March 18th, 2016. Of the 42 responses, 41 were complete and used for the analysis. With 41 complete responses, the response rate was 17.5 percent (which is within 90 percent confidence level and ±10.5 percent margin of error)

Survey Analysis

The survey included 22 questions and a few key questions have been summarized below while the remaining questions were used in the collective summary of all the surveys.

Employees

A majority of the employees are drivers and operations staff with a major share being part-time employees. However, most rural systems usually have employees with multiple responsibilities.

Trip Purpose

For a majority of the providers, medical and shopping were the top two trip purposes. Thirty-two providers provide trips outside their city based service area. Twenty-nine respondents provide trips outside their county based service area.

Reservations

A majority of the respondents chose 'Other' (39%), 'Day before reservation' was the second most popular choice (27%), followed by 'More than one day' (17%). For the mode of making reservations, a majority of respondents chose 'Phone to Dispatch' (76%) and none of the respondents selected 'Online reservations'. The responses to 'Other' included: phone to transit manager, phone to dispatch and driver, phone to dispatch, driver and passenger and phone to business office.

Daily Operations Management

51 percent managed their daily operations by using a computer and 49 percent used daily planners, trip sheets, paper schedule, etc. Although most computerized operation management included using a 'Spreadsheet program' but some respondents mentioned the use of ipads, outlook calendar, spreadsheets and cellphones, Verizon fleet program and a combination of route match and outlook calendar.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Existing Service

Strengths: The comments centered on dependability, reliability, personal interaction, flexibility, and customer service.

Weaknesses: the comments centered on limited hours, availability of drivers, not enough vehicles, long wait time, and not enough advertising.

Perceived Level of Impact for Different Improvements

The specific responses focused on expanding service and hours, additional routes per day and for special events, cost of service for people outside the county, having additional funds for expanded hours, and be able to focus on trips to dialysis treatments. Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit commented that the regional intercity service to major medical, employment and educational services in addition to connecting to other modes of transportation would have a great impact. Figure 10 - Figure 12 show the distribution of responses in various categories.

Figure 10. Aggregate Impact Rating for Administrative Improvements

Level of Impact Rating for Administrative Improvements

Legend: Great impact, Some impact, No impact
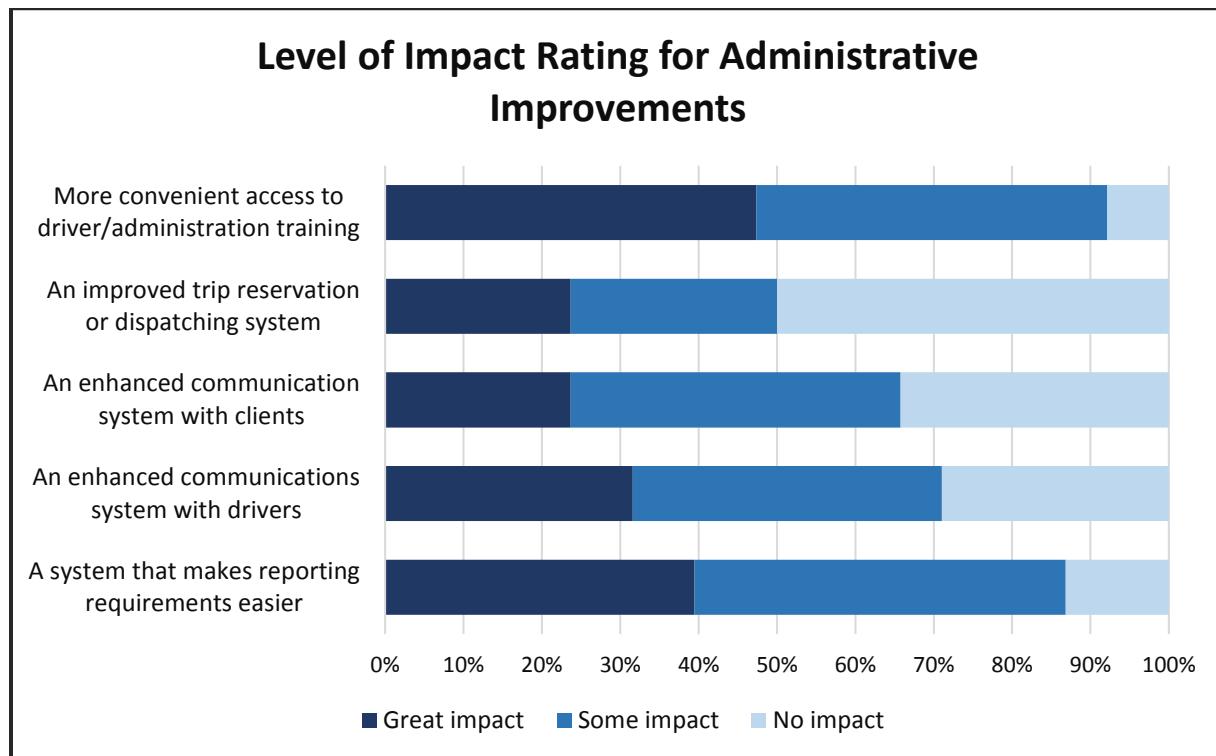
Figure 11. Aggregate Impact Rating for System Improvements

Level of Impact Rating for Payment System Changes

Legend: Great impact, Some impact, No impact
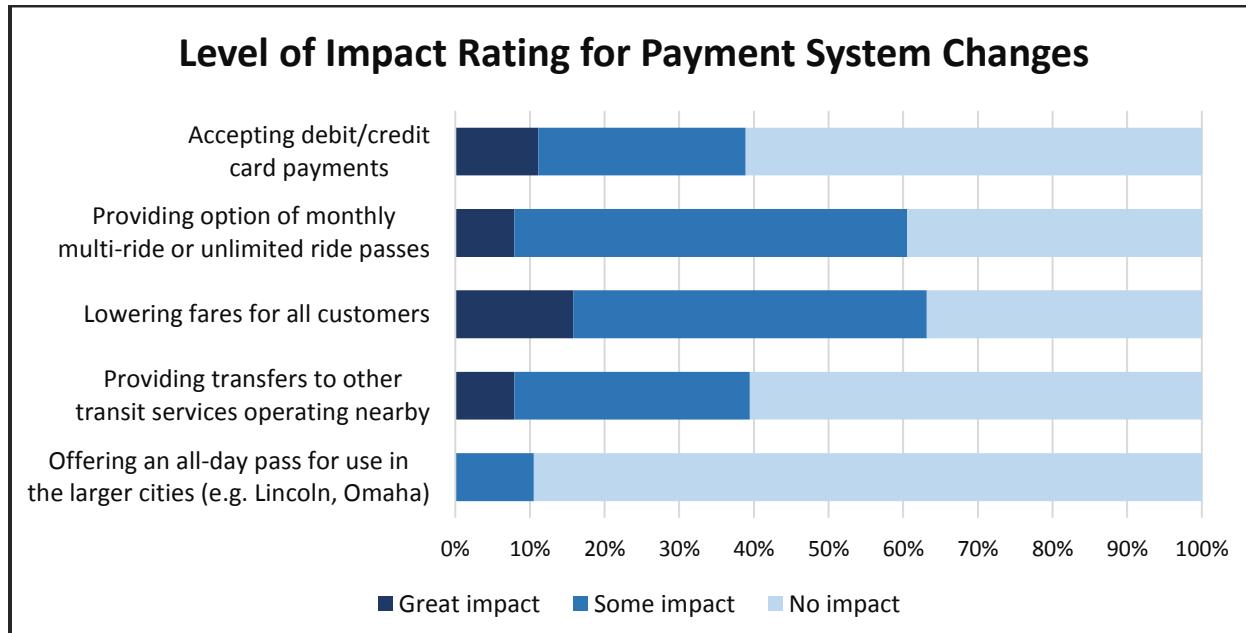
Figure 12. Aggregate Impact Rating for System Improvements

Level of Impact Rating for System Improvements
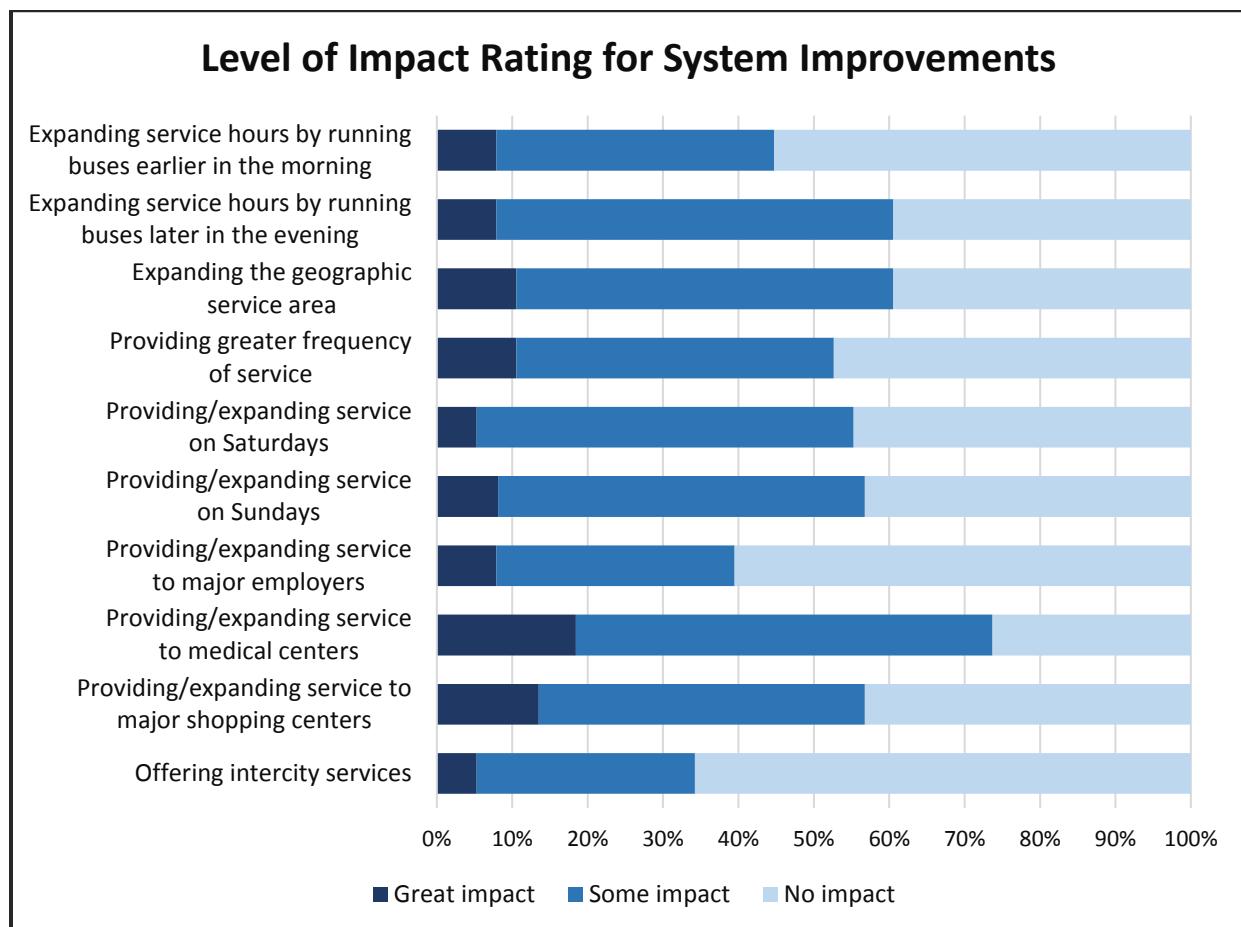
Survey 2

Objective

To gain a broad understanding of the perception of local (including county and municipal) officials regarding mobility and transit needs in their area.

Survey population and Outreach

Members of Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) and League of Nebraska Municipalities (LNM). The two groups of survey population were contacted as described below:

- 444 members (out of 551[6]) of the NACO were contacted via email to complete the online survey. The list of recipients included 92 county clerks, 208 county commissioners and 144 county supervisors. Initial contact to the NACO members was made on November 4th, 2016 and a reminder was sent on November 30th, 2016.
- LNM could not provide a list of members but agreed to forward the invitation to its 605 members. The list of recipients included 388 municipal clerks, 118 city managers or administrators, and 99 mayors. Initial contact to the NACO members was made on November 4th, 2016 and a reminder was sent on December 1st, 2016.

Timeline and Response Rate

The survey was open November 4th through December 21, 2016. Of the 275 responses, 185 were complete and used for the analysis. With 185 complete responses, the response rate was 17.5 percent (which is within 90 percent confidence level and ±5.5 percent margin of error)

Survey Analysis

The survey included 25 questions and a few key questions have been summarized below while the remaining questions were used in the collective summary of all the surveys.

Importance of Transit Service

The community leaders were asked how important the transit services are to their community. Maximum (36 percent) considered transit services as important while only 6 percent considered them 'not at all important'. Figure 13 shows the distribution of responses. Moreover, responses were broken down based on location of community leader (using the six regions used for coordination strategies), Figure 15 shows the how the responses varied across different regions.

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[6] 444 (out of 551) NACO members had an email address included in their contact information.

Figure 13. **Importance of Transit Service**

How Important are the transit services to your community?

- Essential — 12%
- Very important — 28%
- Important — 36%
- Slightly important — 18%
- Not at all important — 6%
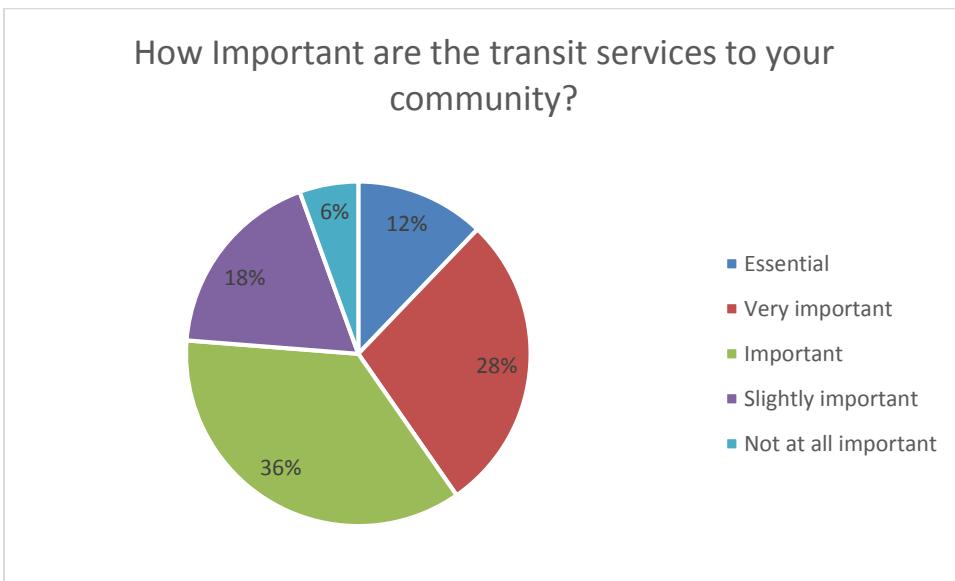
Transit Service Clientele

The community leaders were asked who they think gets served by transit services in their community. Maximum (34 percent) responded that transit services served everyone. Figure 14 show the distribution of all responses. Moreover, responses were broken down based on location of community leader (using the six regions used for coordination strategies), Figure 16 shows the how the responses varied across different regions.

Figure 14. **Transit Service Clientele**

Who do you think the Transit Service Serves?

- Everyone in the community — 34%
- Low-income people — 17%
- People with disabilities — 21%
- Elderly — 29%
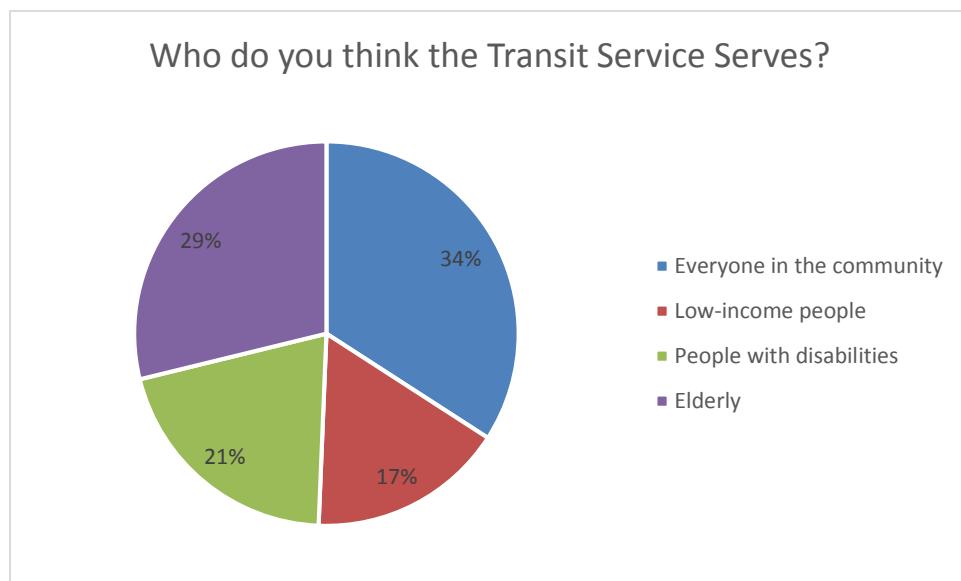
Figure 15.   Importance of Transit Service Based on Regional Location
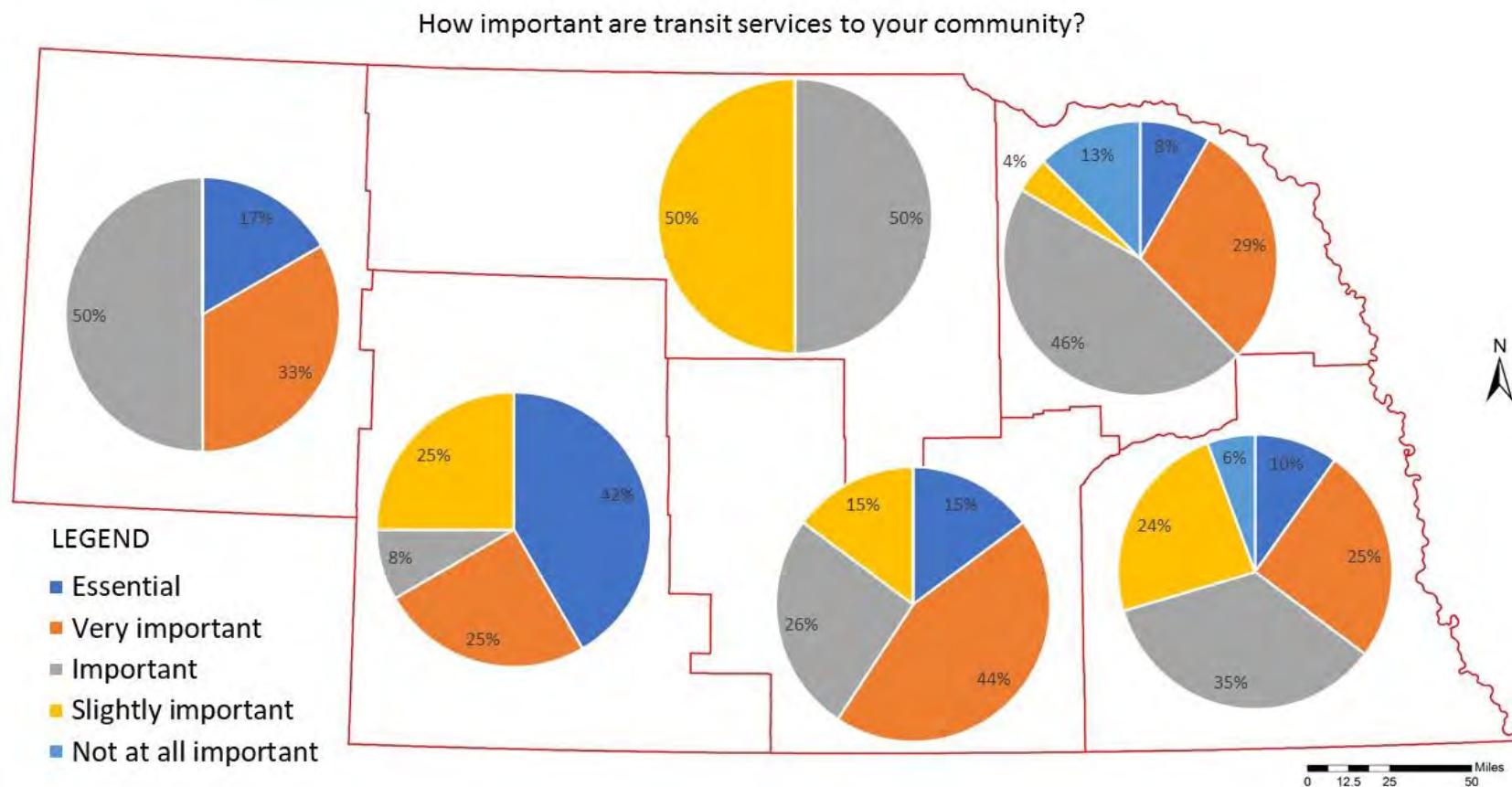
Figure 16.   Transit Service Clientele in Different Regions
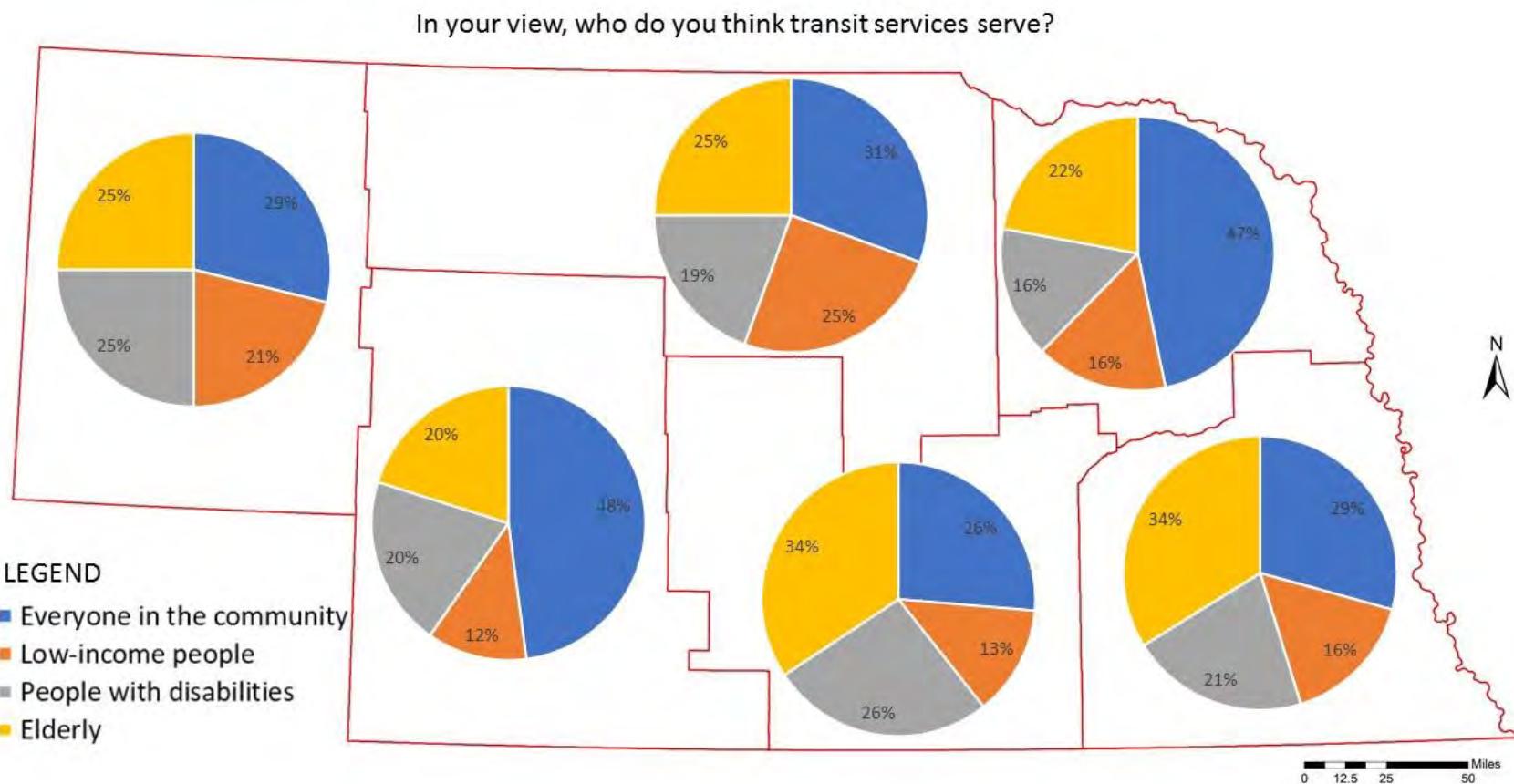
Primary Purpose of Transit Trips

The community leaders were asked 'what is the primary purpose of the transit trips in their community'. About 70 percent respondents considered access to medical services as the primary purpose. Figure 17 shows the distribution of all responses. Moreover, responses were broken down based on location of community leader (using the six regions used for coordination strategies), Figure 18 shows the how the responses varied across different regions.

Figure 17. Primary Purpose of Transit Trips
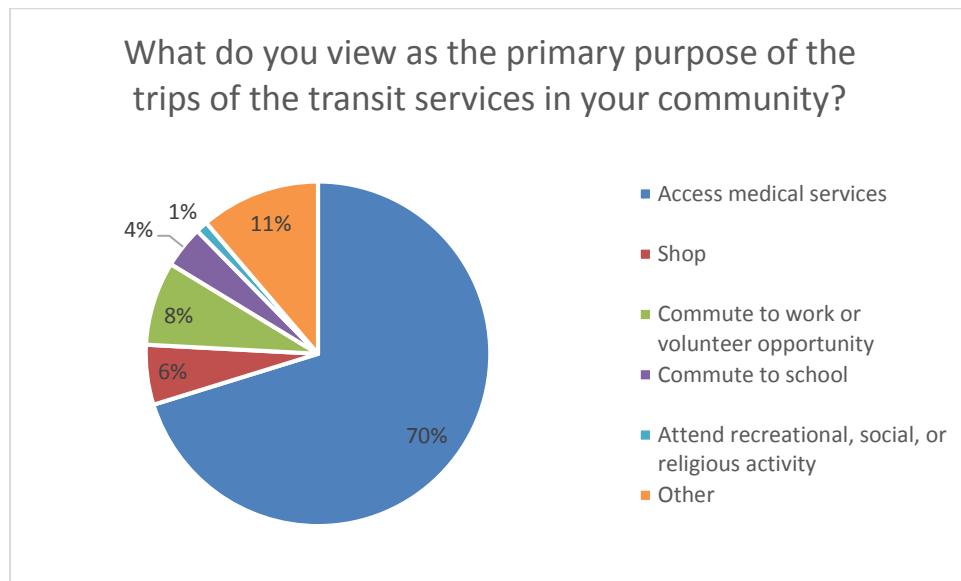
Figure 18. Primary Purpose of Transit Trips Based on Regional Location

What do you view as the primary purpose of the trips of the transit services in your community?

LEGEND
- Access medical services
- Shop
- Commute to work or volunteer opportunity
- Commute to school
- Attend recreational, social, or religious activity
- Other
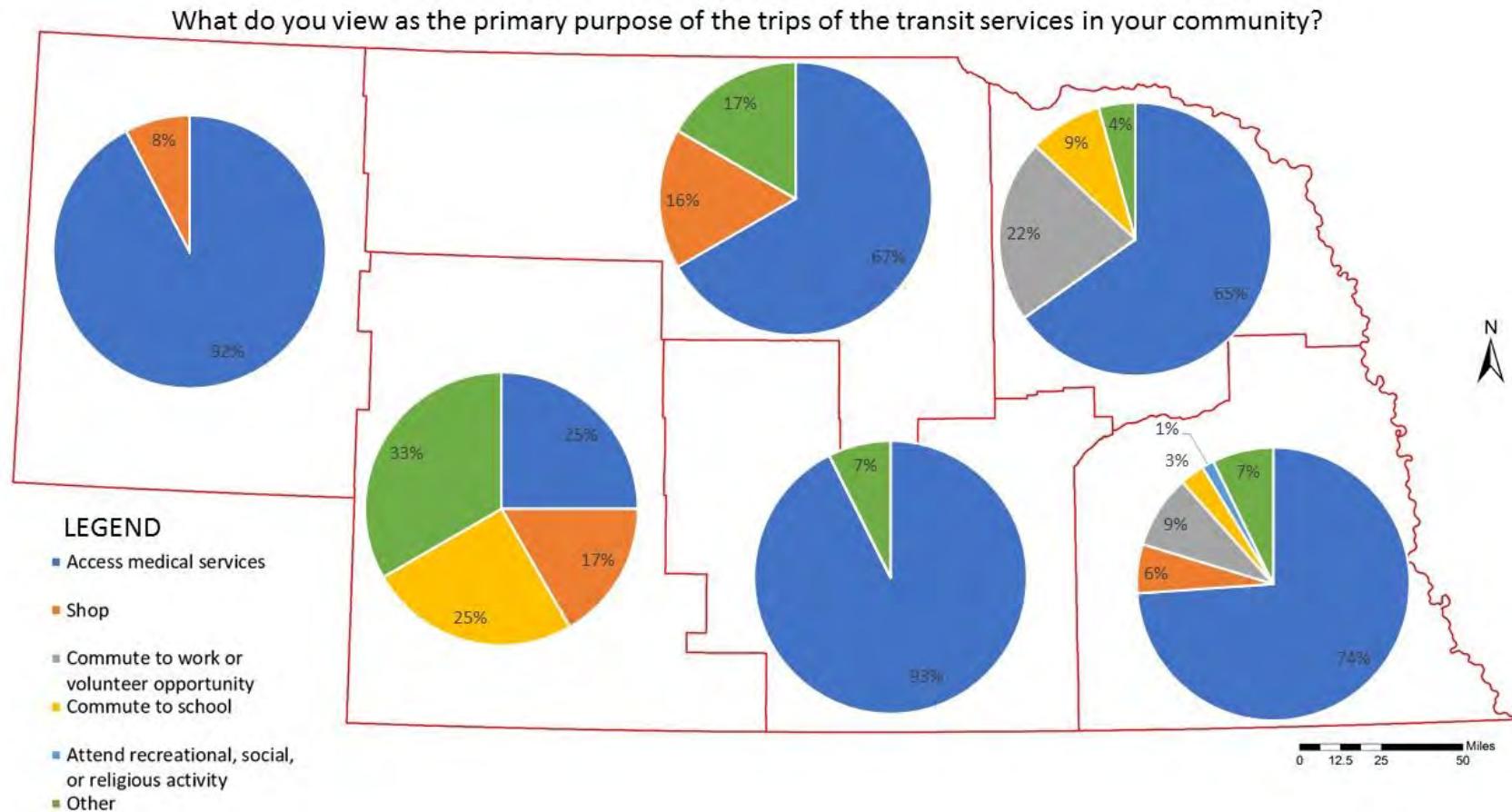
Adequacy of Transit Services

The community leaders were asked if they think that the transit service options are adequate for people in their community. The breakdown of responses wasn't much different between 'yes', 'no' and 'not sure'. Figure 19 shows the distribution of all responses. Moreover, responses were broken down based on location of community leader (using the six regions used for coordination strategies), Figure 20 shows the how the responses varied across different regions.

Figure 19. Adequacy of Transit Service

Do you think there are adequate transit service options for people in your community?

- Yes — 33%
- No — 37%
- Not sure — 30%
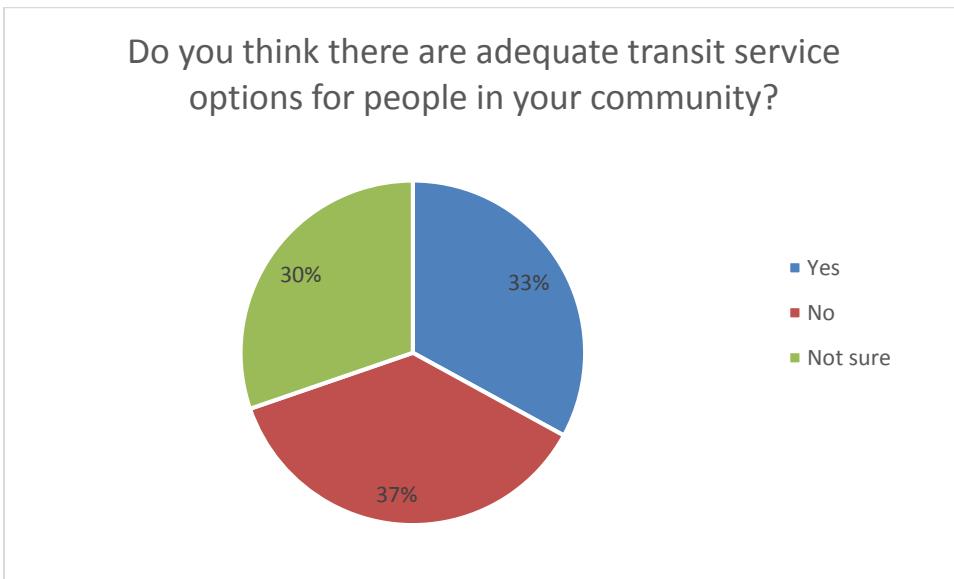
Figure 20.   Adequacy of Transit Service Based on Regional Location

Do you think there are adequate transit service options for people in your community?

LEGEND
- Yes
- No
- Not sure
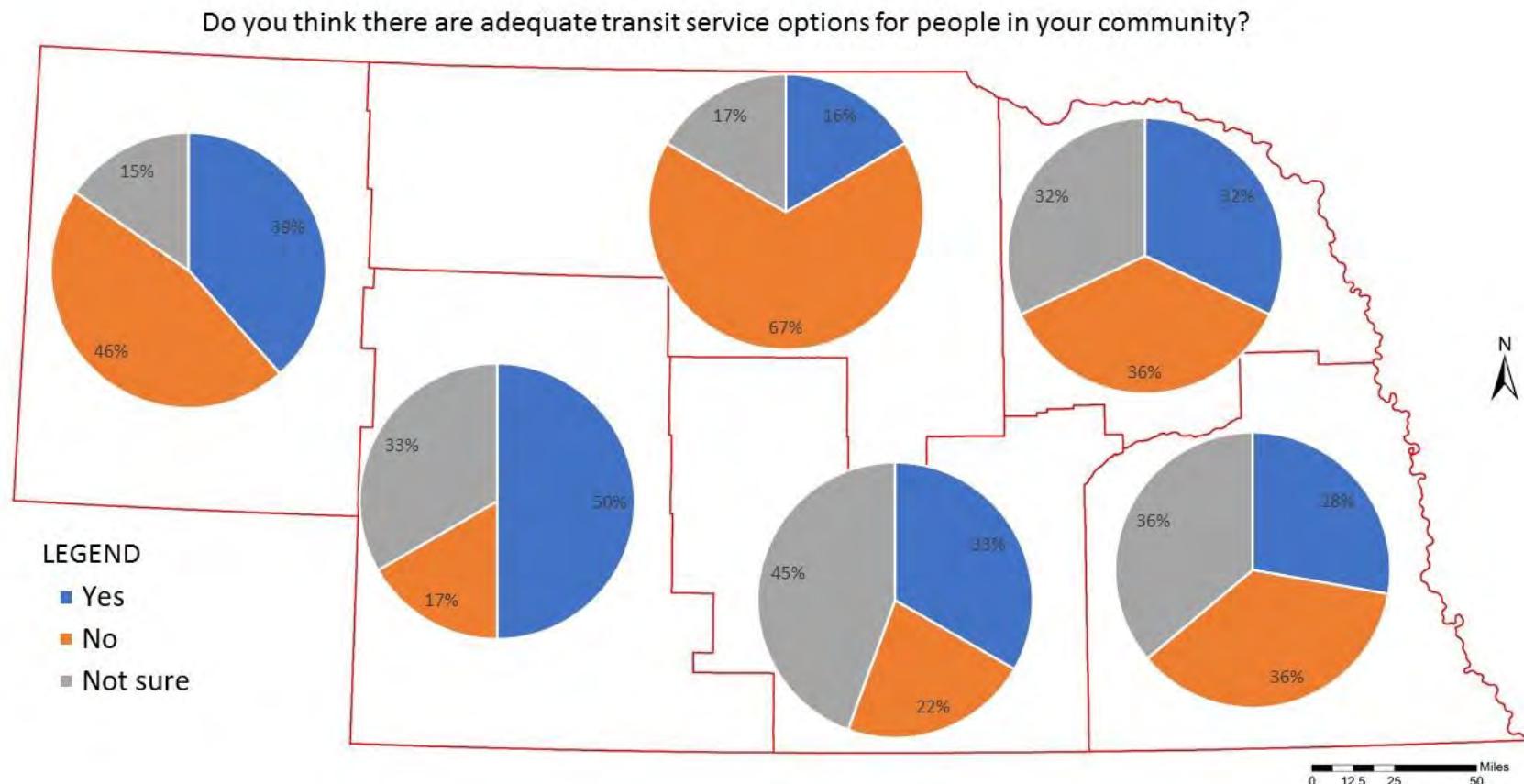
Survey 3

Objective

To gather input identifying opportunities for coordination and challenges faced by rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5310 program, Nebraska's Agencies on Aging, nursing home transportation services funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and transportation providers for disabled population in Nebraska.

Survey population and Outreach

Rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5310 program, Nebraska's Agencies on Aging and nursing home transportation services funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and transportation providers for disabled population in the state of Nebraska. On December 14 and 15th, 2016, the three groups of survey population were invited to participate in the online survey.

- 84 rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5310 program were contacted via email
- 7 Agencies on Aging[7] were contacted via email
- 225 nursing homes were contacted via postal mail
- 43 transportation providers for disabled population were contacted via postal mail

Timeline and Response Rate

The survey was open December 14th, 2016 through January 15th, 2017. Sixty-four responses were received and used for the analysis. With 64 responses, the response rate was 17.8 percent (which is within 90 percent confidence level and ±9.5 percent margin of error).

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[7] Three of the Agencies on Aging are funded by FTA's 5311 program and were also surveyed as part of Survey 1.

Survey Analysis

The survey included 11 questions and a few key questions have been summarized below while the remaining questions were used in the collective summary of all the surveys.

Types of Services

Each agency was asked to list the types of services they offer to their clients. Twenty-seven agencies provided multiple services while thirty-two provided one type of service. As shown in Figure 21, 50 respondents provided nursing services. More than half of the agencies that indicated 'other' response, were an assisted living or independent living facility. Open ended responses in the 'other' category also included area agencies on aging, public transit providers and clinics or hospitals.

Figure 21.   Types of Services Provided
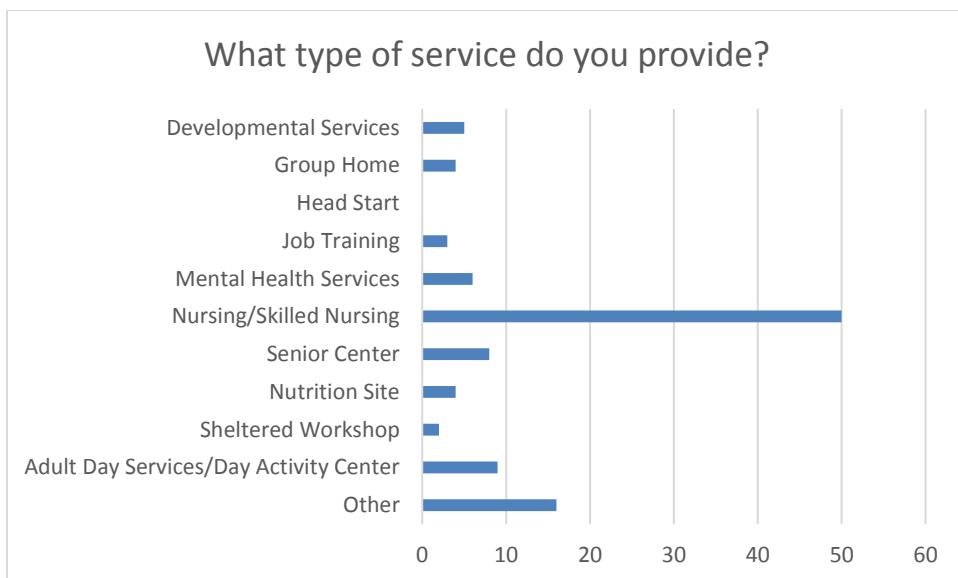
Transportation Service Operation

The survey respondents were asked to provide details of how their customers or clients received transportation services. Figure 22 shows the various categories of responses. The 'other' responses included reimbursing family and friends for rides provided to clients and Medicaid.

Figure 22.   Types of Transportation Service Operation
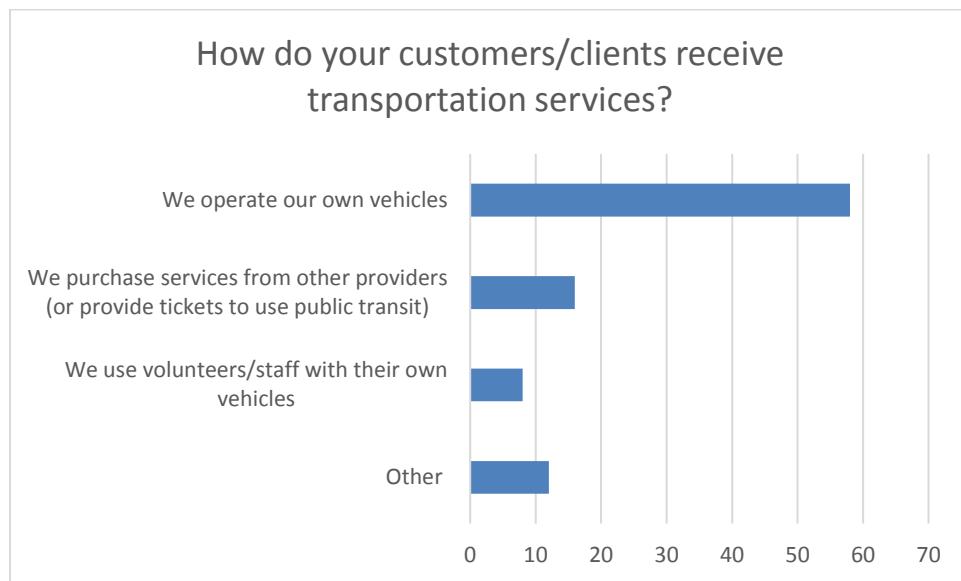
Transportation Trip Purpose

Each agency was asked to list the different trip purposes for rides taken by their patrons. As shown in Figure 23, 'medical', 'recreation/social' and 'shopping' were three most common trip purposes.

Trip Reservation

As shown in Figure 24, about 32 percent agencies indicated that no reservations were needed for rides while 39 percent needed 'more than one day' notice for ride scheduling.

Figure 23. Transportation Trip Purposes

For what purposes do you provide trips?
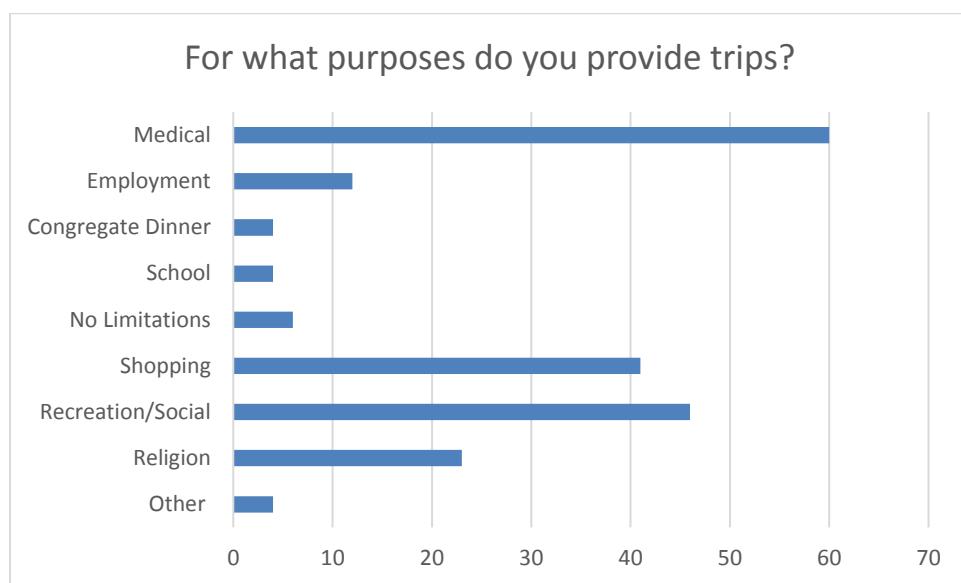
Figure 24. Trip Reservations

How much in advance do customers need to arrange rides?

- More than one day — 39%
- No reservation required — 32%
- Day before reservation — 16%
- Same-day reservation — 13%
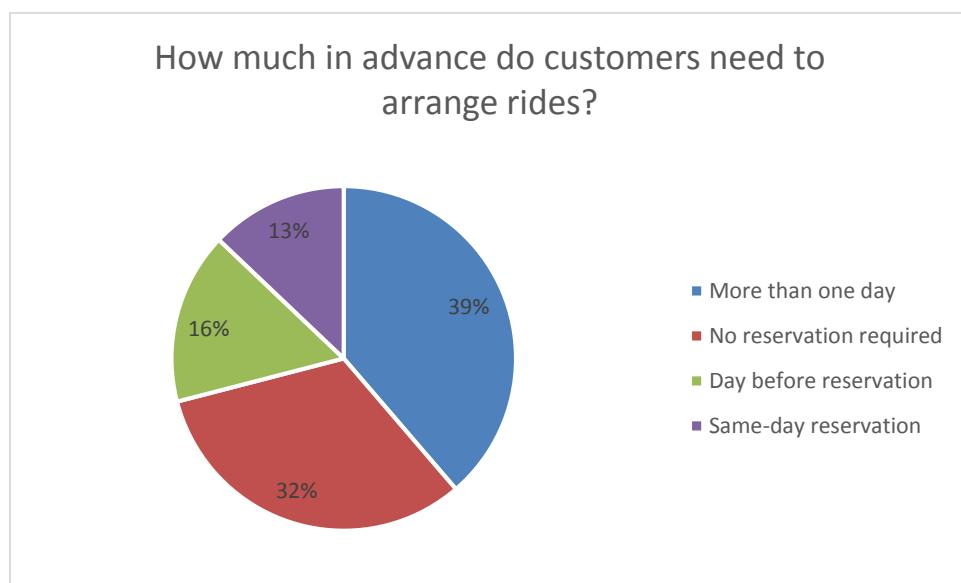
Summary of Identified Needs and Challenges Associated with Meeting the Needs

Currently, there are 10 counties in the state without any public transportation service while there are five counties with only a city-wide public transportation service (not county wide). However, it is important to understand that the public transit agencies providing county wide services are only able to provide limited services in all parts of the county due to limited resources, vehicles or drivers.

The surveys clarified the transit needs and challenges as perceived by transit agencies, 5310 providers, AAAs and nursing homes. The following major conclusions can be drawn based on survey responses, committee and public meetings:

- Most of the survey respondents identified the transportation needs of elderly and disabled population who need an accessible mobility option for access to medical services, shopping or social/recreational activities.

- Limited service hours, limited number of vehicles/ drivers and inadequate funds were some of the major themes that were mentioned in the open-ended responses as the challenges associated with meeting the current transit needs.

- Low population densities and long distances to medical or shopping centers were identified as the major hurdles in meeting the transit need.

- More than half of the survey 3 respondents[8] indicated that there are unmet transportation needs with majority of them including medical access, lack or limited presence of public transit, lack of inter-city service and limited availability of non-medical transportation services in the open-ended response for unmet needs.

- Majority of survey respondents indicated unmet transit needs of the public while recognizing that some residents were eligible to use the transportation services provided through nursing homes, Medicaid program and other federally funded agencies. However, the lengthy eligibility application procedures and complicated processes were also mentioned as a hurdle in utilization of Medicaid services and public transit (if available) was preferred by some patrons.

- The transportation providers funded through 5311 and 5310 programs identified higher costs associated with long transit rides in rural areas, insurance issues (for medical trips), and limited funding as major issues with meeting transportation needs of rural residents.

- Limited information about available transportation options was also a common theme mentioned during all outreach efforts. Hence, increased marketing for all available transit options for public was suggested.

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[8] Survey of 5310 providers, AAAs and nursing homes.

- Increasing demand for transportation to medical appointments and limited funding for transit was also prevalent in transit need or challenge questions asked using different outreach efforts.
- Community leaders indicated that providing local match funds, increasing costs of transit operation and more people needing transit have an impact on the current local transit system (if existent in their community).

The community leader survey (survey 2) asked the respondents to list the primary transit issues in their community to assess the transit needs and issues at the local level. Figure 25 and Figure 26 show the major themes from the responses using a word cloud. In these word clouds, the more a theme was mentioned in the responses, the bolder (or bigger) it will appear in the image. Some themes may appear very small in the regional word cloud due to limited response rate for the question by respondents in the region.

Figure 25. Word Cloud for Primary Transit Issues for all Regions

Figure 25. Word Cloud for Primary Transit Issues for all Regions
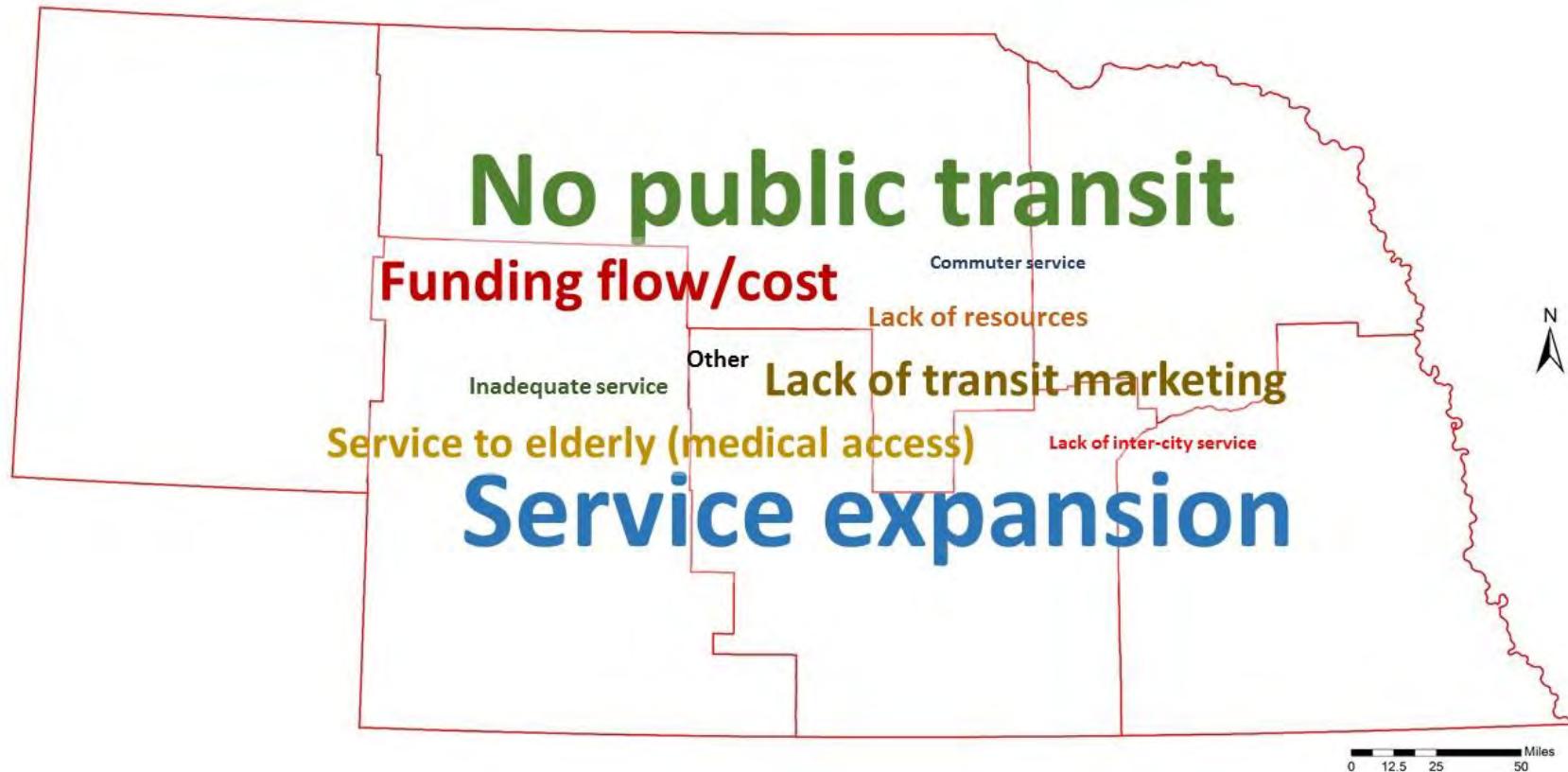
Figure 26. Word Cloud for Primary Transit Issues Based on Regional Location
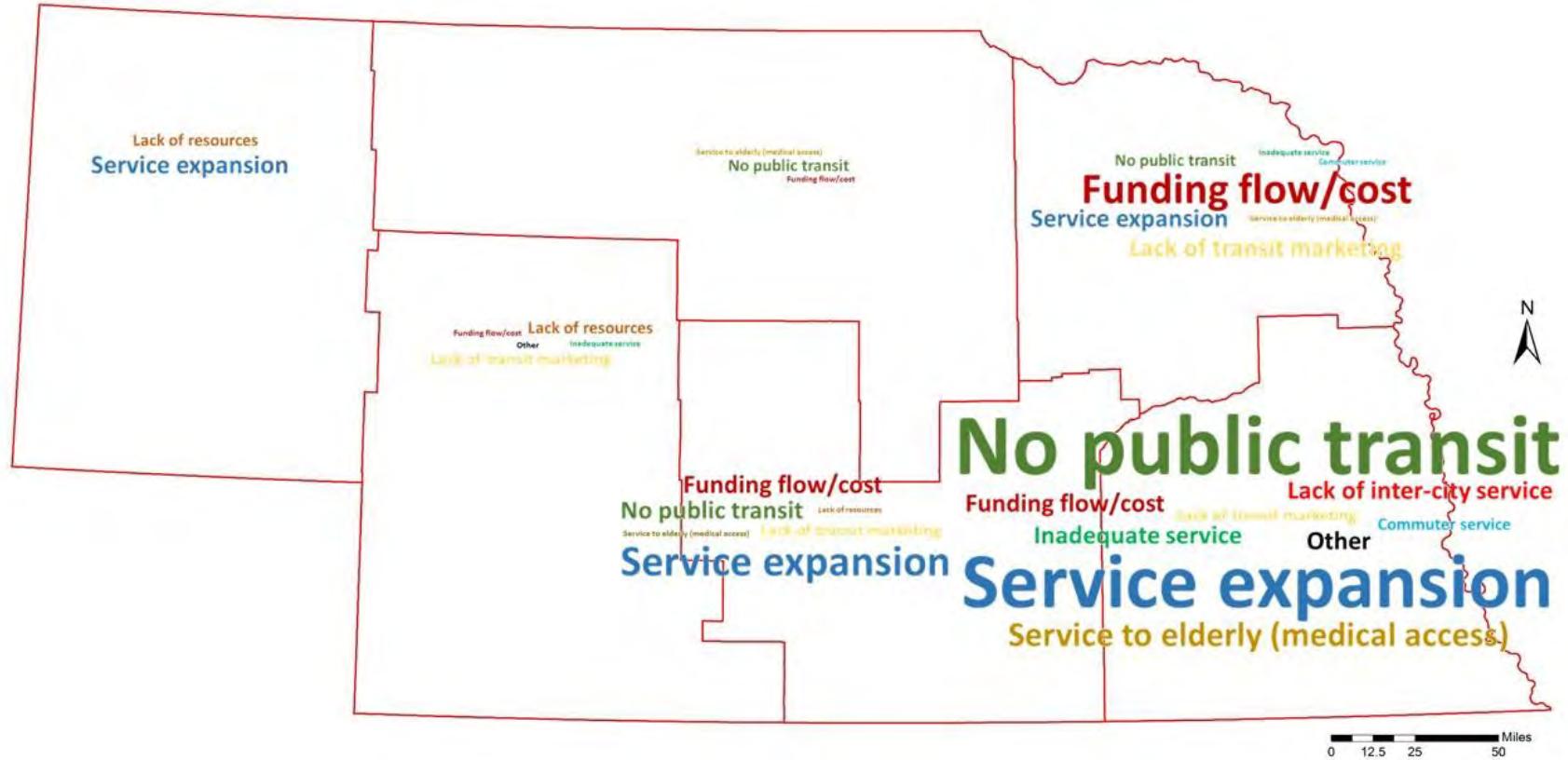
Action Plan for Coordination

To develop a need based coordination plan for the state of Nebraska it is important to realize the interest in coordination activities and the type of coordination activities suggested by transportation providers, community officials, AAAs and nursing homes.

Coordination Interest and Partnering Ideas

Based on survey 1 (survey of rural transit providers funded by FTA's 5311 and 5310 program), the following five coordination activities were supported by about 40-60 percent of respondents:

- Pooled driver training
- Contract with another community or county to provide transit service to our clients
- Joint purchasing (parts, fuel, insurance, vehicle)
- Constructing shared maintenance or storage facilities
- Sharing maintenance staff

Survey 3 (survey of 5310 providers, AAAs and nursing homes) responses indicated that around 30 percent of respondents were currently participating in coordination activities. The main reasons for lack of coordination were also mentioned including client eligibility, limited resources and inadequate funds.

Survey 2 (community leader survey) showed that 19 percent of respondents thought coordinating transit services was not important for their community and 15 percent were unsure. The remaining respondents (66 percent) were distributed between 'important', 'very important' and 'essential'.

Coordination Strategies

Mobility management is defined as a strategic approach to service coordination among transportation providers to create a full range of transit services. As an effective mobility management approach, current transit conditions and needs were carefully assessed. The wide range of current conditions and need across the state led to organization of strategies into themes that would allow more consistent discussion over broadly divergent areas. The organizing themes were:

- Leveraging existing service – Are there ways of making small changes to current service plans to result in more people having access to service?

- System efficiency – Is there overlapping (redundant) service in some areas of the state that could be reduced/eliminated by agencies coordinating efforts?

- Service expansion – While much of the state has access to some level of public transportation service, entire counties and numerous communities do not have any access. By working with neighboring counties/communities, those without service may find a partner.

- Marketing – Every transit agency needs to do some level of outreach to let potential customers know service is available. Sharing responsibilities for some marketing will reduce overall costs.

- Funding – Multiple agencies working together to provide service creates an opportunity to bring more funds to the table through spreading the burden.

Each of the five themes are characterized by a series of coordination strategies identified to address service gaps and unmet transportation needs for older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income. For each strategy, a lead agency or "champion" is suggested to implement and grow the strategy within a specific region or, when applicable, at the state level. The entities listed represent possible lead agencies and should in no way preclude other agencies or organizations from leading an effort to address the strategy. A table showing description of each strategy by theme is included in Appendix D.

Strategies Screening and Implementation

Across the state the benefits and potential for each of the strategies to address the current and anticipated unmet needs and gaps were evaluated relative to a series of performance measures. The measures include:

- Need: Does the strategy address an identified need and is the need a low, moderate, or high priority?

- Access/Availability: Is the program/technology/policy associated with the strategy readily available to the locality or is action required by outside entities?

- Implementation Challenges: How significant are the barriers that must be overcome before the strategy can be implemented?

- Local Support: Is there a local support or opposition to the strategy?

- Costs: Are the capital and operating costs associated with the strategy within the financial means of local agencies?

Table 2 summarizes the results of the strategies screening for the range of strategies.

Table 2. Strategies Screening Summary - Statewide

Theme	Strategy/Sub-strategy	Need	Access/ Availability	Implementation Challenges	Local Support	Cost Capital	Cost Operating
Leverage Existing Service	Establish Rider Companion Program	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●
	Implement Travel Training Program	◐	○	◐	◐	●	●
	Promoting Community Benefits of Service/Coordination	◐	●	●	●	●	●
	Improved Transit Traveler Information	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●
	Implement Mobility Manager Concept	◐	○	◐	◐	●	◐
	Regional Service – Make Stops in Towns Along Way to Provide Service	●	◐	◐	◐	●	●
	Colleague Experience Sharing (Fund Raising/Medical Coordination)	◐	●	●	●	●	●
Service Efficiency/ Cost Effectiveness	Enhance Technology Use to Improve Coordination	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
	On-going Advancing Strategies/Identifying New Ideas	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●
	Text to Email Reservations	○	●	●	◐	●	●
	Reservation Mobile Application (App)	○	●	●	◐	●	●
	Share Responsibility for:						
	Management	◐	●	●	◐	●	●
	Operations:						
	Local Service	◐	●	●	◐	●	●
	Regional Service (Existing or New)	◐	●	●	●	●	●
	Maintenance	◐	◐	◐	○	●	●
	Centralize Reservations and Dispatch	○	●	○	○	◐	◐
	Shared Purchasing and Capital Investment (Vehicles/ Technology)	○	●	○	◐	○	◐
Expanded Service	Volunteer Driver/Escort Program	◐	◐	◐	○	●	●
	Transit Service Expansion and Improvements	◐	◐	●	●	○	○
Marketing/ Management	Marketing/Branding/Outreach	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	◐
	Regional and Statewide Coordination Committees	◐	◐	○	●	●	●
Funding Enhancement	Identify and Assess Alternate Local Funding	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Convert Selected Regional Routes to Intercity Feeder	●	◐	◐	○	●	●

○ - Low/Unsupportive/High Cost   ◐ - Moderate/Neutral/Moderate Cost   ● - High/Supportive/Low Cost

Appendices

Appendix A – Survey 1 Instrument

Appendix B – Survey 2 Questions

Appendix C – Survey 3 Instrument

Appendix D – Coordination Strategies by Theme

Appendix A. Survey 1 Instrument

NDOR Mobility Management Project

Introduction

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) is performing a Mobility Management Project. The purpose of the Mobility Management Project is to identify opportunities for enhanced coordination between adjacent counties and/or cities/villages with the goal of improving the cost effectiveness of the service. To gather meaningful input on the project, we invite you to participate in a brief survey.

Thank you in advance for you feedback. Click "Next" below to begin the survey.

General

1. Please enter the following information:

Provider Name:	
Mailing Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Website:	
Contact Person:	

System Information

2. What is your transit service employment for each category listed below?

	Paid Full Time Employees	Paid Part Time Employees	Volunteers
Operations	⬍	⬍	⬍
Dispatch	⬍	⬍	⬍
Maintenance	⬍	⬍	⬍
Drivers	⬍	⬍	⬍
Other	⬍	⬍	⬍

If other, please describe:

3. Please list your top five (5) trip destinations. Enter a landmark or address.

Location 1:

Location 2:

Location 3:

Location 4:

Location 5:

4. Do you provide trips outside your city based service? If yes,

Please list the
destinations:

How often do you make
these trips?

5. Do you provide trips outside your county based service? If yes,

Please list the
destinations:

How often do you make
these trips?

6. Please indicate your reservations policy (check one).

◯ No reservation required

◯ Same-day reservation

◯ Day before reservation

◯ More than one day

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

7. Please indicate your reservations procedure (check one).

◯ Online reservations

◯ Email

◯ Phone to Dispatch

◯ Phone to Driver

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 8. Do you use computers to manage your daily operations?

◯ No

◯ Yes

NDOR Mobility Management Project

9. If not by computer, by what means do you use to manage your daily operations?

10. Please check which software components that you use on a regular basis to manage your daily operations. Check all that apply.

☐ Word Processing program

☐ Spreadsheet program

☐ Database program

☐ Scheduling/dispatching software

☐ Specialized reporting software

☐ Other (please specify)

11. Please indicate the technology areas that would improve your system. Check all that apply.

☐ Computers

☐ Online booking

☐ Centralized dispatch

☐ Global Positioning System (GPS)

☐ Other (please specify)

Transit System Needs

12. What are the strengths of your existing service:

13. What are the weaknesses of your existing service:

14. Rate the level of impact to reaching your goals that each of the following administrative improvements would provide.

	Great impact	Some impact	No impact
A system that makes reporting requirements easier	◯	◯	◯
An enhanced communications system with drivers	◯	◯	◯
An enhanced communication system with clients	◯	◯	◯
An improved trip reservation/dispatching system	◯	◯	◯
More convenient access to driver/administration training	◯	◯	◯

15. Rate the level of impact towards reaching your goals the following system improvements would provide.

	Great impact	Some impact	No impact
Offering intercity services	○	○	○
Providing/expanding service to major shopping centers	○	○	○
Providing/expanding service to medical centers	○	○	○
Providing/expanding service to major employers	○	○	○
Providing/expanding service on Sundays	○	○	○
Providing/expanding service on Saturdays	○	○	○
Providing greater frequency of service	○	○	○
Expanding the geographic service area	○	○	○
Expanding service hours by running buses later in the evening	○	○	○
Expanding service hours by running buses earlier in the morning	○	○	○

List any others that would have great impact:

16. If you answered "great impact" to any of the categories in Question #14, please provide specifics:

17. Rate the level of impact towards reaching your goals the following payment system changes would provide.

	Great impact	Some impact	No impact
Offering an all-day pass for use in the larger cities (e.g. Lincoln, Omaha)	○	○	○
Providing transfers to other transit services operating nearby	○	○	○
Lowering fares for all customers	○	○	○
Providing option of monthly multi-ride or unlimited ride passes	○	○	○
Accepting debit/credit card payments	○	○	○

List any other:

18. Rate your opinion with each of the following current transportation need statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Transporting riders for medical appointments is the fastest growing segment of my operation	○	○	○	○	○
My staff and driver training needs are being adequately met	○	○	○	○	○
The biggest problem for rural transit is not enough funding from all levels	○	○	○	○	○
Local trip needs are being met	○	○	○	○	○
Travel needs to regional centers are being met	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

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19. Rate your opinion with each of the following emerging transportation need statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am confident that my organization will be able to meet all my customer's transit needs	○	○	○	○	○
My organization would be willing to consider partnering with another organization or entity to meet our clients' travel needs	○	○	○	○	○
One of my biggest challenges will be to get local matching funds for equipment and buses	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
One of my biggest challenges will be meeting medical transportation demand	○	○	○	○	○
The cost of insurance will have a significant impact on our operations	○	○	○	○	○
The cost of fuel will have a significant impact on our operations	○	○	○	○	○
One of my biggest challenges will be to find qualified drivers	○	○	○	○	○
My clients/riders will need to travel more often than they do today	○	○	○	○	○
My clients/riders will need to travel to more locations than they do today	○	○	○	○	○
The number of clients/riders my organization serves will increase	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Coordination

20. What interest do you have in the following coordination activities? Check all that apply.

	Interested	Not interested
Centralized transportation/dispatch	○	○
Joint purchasing (parts, fuel)	○	○
Pooled driver training	○	○
Sharing vehicles	○	○
Joint vehicle purchase	○	○
Consolidating service with another provider	○	○
Contract with another community/county to provide their service	○	○
Employing a mobility manager	○	○

Other (please specify)

21. Which of the following partnering statements would your agency/community support? Check all that apply.

	Support	Don't support
Participating in a joint purchasing program for vehicles, fuels, insurance, etc.	○	○
Shared communications system	○	○
Sharing vehicles	○	○
Sharing dispatch staff	○	○
Sharing administrative staff	○	○
Sharing driver staff	○	○
Sharing maintenance staff	○	○
Constructing shared maintenance or storage facilities	○	○
Combining transit routes	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

22. What do you perceive as the challenges of coordination?

[   ]

Appendix B. – Survey 2 Questions

Q3	How informed are you about transit services in your community?
Q4	How important are transit services to your community?
Q5	In your view, who do you think transit services serve? (Click all that apply.)
Q6	What do you view as the primary purpose of the trips of the transit services in your community? - Selected Choice
Q6_6_TEXT	Other, please specify - Text
Q7	What transit services are available in your community?
Q8	Do you think there are adequate transit service options for people in your community?
Q9	If no, does your community have plans to expand or create additional transit service options?
Q10_1	Overall satisfaction
Q10_2	Being able to get a reservation
Q10_3	Availability of schedule information
Q10_4	Convenience of schedules (days/times)
Q10_5	Service punctuality (on time)
Q10_6	Fair value for money
Q10_7	Going where people need to go
Q10_8	The condition of the vehicles
Q10_9	The time it takes to use transit, such as numerous stops and waiting
Q12	What are the primary transit issues facing your local community?
Q13	What assistance does your community need to address local transit issues? What would be most helpful in addressing these transit issues?
Q14_1	Providing local match funds
Q14_2	Having to deal with increasing costs
Q14_3	More people needing transit
Q14_4	Fewer people needing transit
Q14_5	Having more non-English speaking residents
Q14_6	Needing to recruit workers
Q14_7	Having to work to retain drivers
Q14_8	Having to work to retain maintenance crew members
Q14_9	Keeping up with state rules and regulations
Q15	How important do you think it is for your community to coordinate your transit services with other communities?
Q16	Has your community considered coordinating your transit services with other communities?
Q17	If yes, what were found to be the benefits and challenges of coordinating your transit services with other communities?
Q18	If no, do you think there would be any benefits to coordinating your transit services with other communities?
Q20_1	Customer/ Consumer 15%
Q20_2	City/County Government Local Match 9%
Q20_3	State Government 9%

Q20_4	Federal Government 67%
Q21	Is there a willingness to increase funding for the local match requirement for new or expanded service?
Q23	What is your position in the community?
Q24	How long have you been in this position?
Q25	How long have you been a member of the community?

Appendix C. – Survey 3 Instrument

Introduction

Thank you for your voluntarily participating in this study, your feedback is important.

This survey should only take 4-5 minutes to complete, and your responses are completely anonymous.

If you have any questions or need assistance taking the survey, please contact Bill Troe, SRF Project Manager by calling 402-513-2158 or emailing btroe@srfconsulting.com.

1. What type of services do you provide? (check all that apply)

☐ Developmental Services

☐ Group Home

☐ Head Start

☐ Job Training

☐ Mental Health Services

☐ Nursing

☐ Senior Center

☐ Nutrition Site

☐ Sheltered Workshop

☐ Day Activity Center

☐ Other (please specify)

2. Where is your agency located?

3. How do your customers/clients receive transportation services? (check all that apply)

☐ We operate our own vehicles

☐ We purchase services from other providers (or provide tickets to use public transit)

☐ We use volunteers with their own vehicles

☐ Other (please specify)

[ ]

4. Does your clientele include people covered through the Medicaid program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5. How many vehicles do you operate?

Number of **Large** Capacity (over 30 passengers) Vehicles [ ]

Number of **Medium** Capacity (15 to 30 passengers) Vehicles [ ]

Number of **Small** Capacity (less than 15 passengers) Vehicles [ ]

6. For what purposes do you provide trips? (check all that apply)

- [ ] Medical
- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Congregate Dinner
- [ ] School
- [ ] No Limitations
- [ ] Shopping
- [ ] Recreation/Social
- [ ] Religion
- [ ] Other (please specify)

7. How much in advance do customers need to arrange rides?

- ( ) No reservation required
- ( ) Same-day reservation
- ( ) Day before reservation
- ( ) More than one day

8. What interest do you have in possible coordination activities? (check all that apply)

- [ ] Contracting trips to other agencies for going to other towns
- [ ] Providing trips to others for a fare
- [ ] Working with another agency to transport your clients
- [ ] Transporting the general public
- [ ] Sharing Vehicles
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other (please specify)

9. Do you participate in any coordination activities with nearby agency or providers?

10. Are there any transportation needs in your local area not currently being met by local agencies? If yes, please describe.

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11. What are the barriers to meeting the needs you described above?

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Appendix D. Coordination Strategies by Theme

Each of the five themes are characterized by a series of coordination strategies identified to address service gaps and unmet transportation needs for older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income. As each strategy is evaluated by agencies and stakeholders in a particular region or within a unique service area, a lead agency or "champion" is suggested to facilitate implementation.

Leveraging Existing Service

Rider Companion Program (Bus Buddy)

Some individuals rely on paratransit because they lack confidence or experience to use the fixed-route system. Some transit systems have instituted companion rider/bus buddy programs to support individuals transitioning away from paratransit to fixed route service use. A companion program involves not only training individuals to use fixed-route but also pairing individuals with a "bus buddy" who will travel with them on the bus until the individual gains sufficient confidence to travel independently.

Needs Addressed
- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Ability to Coordinate Transit for High Needs Riders / Patients

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Program helps reduce demand for paratransit services by increasing consumer knowledge in using and independently navigating the fixed-route system • Program builds good community through establishing a group of volunteers who act as advocates for the transit system	• The individualized nature of the program makes it difficult to assess overall impact on paratransit usage • There is a need to provide administrative support and create the initial training regimen to be followed by volunteers • Volunteer retention can be an issue, creating an ongoing need to train new volunteers
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Travel Training

People who have never used public transportation often have real concerns and fears about using the public transportation network. This strategy has many of the same goals of a companion program, however, is more formalized. A training program that teaches consumers how to use public transportation and become confident transit riders can help encourage use of public transit. Travel training may be promoted as a marketing strategy to encourage key consumer groups (i.e., older adults) to use public transit; or it may be targeted towards frequent users of paratransit to encourage individuals to use lower-cost fixed route services, as appropriate to the individual's circumstances.

Needs Addressed
- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Enhance the Perception of Transit Service
- Increased Number of Clients / Riders, More Destinations

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
- Program helps reduce demand for paratransit services by increasing consumer knowledge in using and independently navigating the fixed-route system - Encourages and supports use of local fixed-route services - May reduce demand for paratransit services - Increases awareness and use of a variety of community transportation services - May support other regional priorities, such as workforce development	- Some audiences and individuals may require specialized training - May require multiple-agency cooperation and coordination to identify training opportunities (adds to complexity) - Training may require support from agencies that perceive little or no long-term gain
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Promote Community Benefits of Service/Coordination

In rural areas, public transit is often seen as a service focused on getting seniors and persons with disabilities to the doctor. Additionally, providing trips to larger regional centers to access goods/service that are not available locally is often seen as an avenue to economic leakage because people are also doing some of their shopping that could be done locally. What is ignored or downplayed from this perspective is the local economic benefit, especially in small towns, that transportation provides as it allows people to remain in the small town for a longer period of their life. Many times, the dollars transit users spend in the local community are downplayed when the riders are seen leaving town to travel to a regional center. Additionally, the role that transit can play in allowing seniors or persons with a disability to remain in their preferred small town is not accounted into the discussion of providing the local match for the service. To comprehensively understand the economic benefit of transit provision, it is important to consider the dollars that transit users provide to the community through property taxes and sales taxes on goods they buy locally. Availability of transit service (whether it is local or regional) has been shown to be a critical factor in the aging-in-place decision process.

By documenting community benefits material to present to city councils, county boards, agency boards, etc., the anecdotal argument of the benefit (which is typically provided) can be transformed into a dollars and cents discussion.

Needs Addressed
- Promote the Benefit of Aging-in-Place
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination
- Finding Local Match Money, Educating Boards about Needs / Importance of Service / Sell Benefits
- Establish / Continue Regular Communication Between Stakeholders in Region
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Enhance the Perception of Transit Service

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Provides agencies with critical information that can support the request for matching funds • Brings an awareness that transit users are not a drain on limited local funds and that riders support the community	• Getting final funding decision makers to listen to the argument • Agencies having the opportunity/ audience to make the argument more than once a year
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Improved Transit Traveler Information

Public transportation could improve travel options, particularly for older and disabled adults, by improving transit route and schedule information. Suggestions such as improving the readability, accessibility and comprehension of route and schedule brochures was recommended by publishing such documents in accessible formats using large, bold fonts, and using color coded maps with contrasting primary colors indicating the different routes.

Needs Addressed
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Enhance the Perception of Transit Service

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Improvements in consumer comprehension of available services can increase transit utilization by seniors and persons with disabilities. • Enhanced schedules and route information will generally aid usability by the general public as well	• Wholesale revisions to all system route and schedule information is expensive • There is no industry standard or consensus regarding the style and presentation of more comprehensible route and schedule information
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Regional Service – Make Stops in Towns Along the Way to Regional Centers (Adds Service to Intermediate Communities)

Most transit agencies providing regional service generally do not stop between leaving their primary service area and regional centers such as Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, Kearney, etc. Along the way, however, the vehicle travels through or near the communities that may have limited or no service to the same regional center the passing vehicle is destined. By conducting some level of marketing on the travel schedule and fares and adjusting daily travel schedules a little, more people in the state could have an improved level of access to medical service, shopping and social visits.

Items to incorporate into the effort include:
- Develop marketing material to distribute in potential service communities.
- Develop a fare structure for potential intermediate service communities.
- Integrate community stops into outbound and return regional service schedules.
- Adjust regional center in-town schedules into the daily travel plan.

Needs Addressed
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Medical Providers and Other Destinations
- Establish a Link Between Local Service and Inter-Regional Transit Service
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Address Insufficient Geographic Coverage, access destinations outside the service area
- Ability to Meet Current and Future Demand
- Increased Number of Clients / Riders, More Destinations

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Increase level of access to services and mobility for rural area residents. • Reduces (potentially) costs to individual agencies • Enhances the ability to coordinate regional trips as all know schedule.	• Coordinating fares structures. • Message not getting out without efforts by providers and community leaders. • Individuals will likely need training and support.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Colleague Experience Sharing (Examples: Fund Raising/Medical Coordination)

Across the state there is a vast amount of expertise within various agencies that could be shared through Regional Coordination Committee meetings. For example, many rural and urban agencies have developed outreach programs emphasizing the benefits to a county or a community to request funds as a funding partner. Other agencies have successfully partnered with healthcare providers to coordinate medical appointments for patients from a community that requires a regional trip. Other agencies still have developed outreach programs that promote their service such that most agencies in the community know that there is a partner to support them when need arises. What is needed is a good understanding of where the internal experts are located and a means of getting their story out to other agencies across the state.

Additionally, NDOT transit staff have access to industry experts that can be invited to committee meetings to present methods of improving the level of coordination between services provided in a region. One example discussed during outreach efforts was how agencies can use 5310 resources to support public transportation efforts and increase the use of 5310 assets and staff.

A Share Your Expertise Program can be organized and promoted across the State as a clearinghouse of people to lead discussions, sample material for educating others, and material that can be used to inform more people. It is assumed that many regional committee meetings will use video conferencing technology to conduct their meetings and training efforts thereby minimizing the travel costs and the time away from their primary task for the experts.

Needs Addressed
- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Establish / Continue Regular Communication Between Stakeholders in Region
- Address Policy Barriers in Crossing Jurisdictional Boundaries
- Finding Local Match Money, Educating Boards about Needs / Importance of Service / Sell Benefits
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination
- Identify Services Available in the Region

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Higher level of understanding of activities that lead to improving mobility for more people • Enhanced benefit potential for investing time in regional committee meetings • Improved cost-effectiveness of transit service	• Identifying where experts reside • Keeping an up to date list of experts • Time for experts to develop and deliver training sessions
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Service Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness

Enhance Technology Use to Improve Coordination

The provision of transit, paratransit, and human service agency transportation has long benefitted from use of technology to lower the operating costs, reduce customer travel times, and provide more convenient routes and schedules. Use of technology to improve services to the target populations can benefit both the transportation provider and the customer.

Technologies can include those that benefit customers (real-time traveler information, electronic fare payment, interactive voice recognition telephone systems, or surveillance/security systems) or transit provider organizations (automatic vehicle location, computer dispatch and scheduling, mobile data computers, and coordination/mobility management software).

Needs Addressed
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Large Employers and Other Destinations
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Medical Providers and Other Destinations
- Promote a Link Between Local Service and Inter-Regional Transit Service
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Ability to Coordinate Transit for High Needs Riders / Patients

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Technology can improve operational efficiency without increases in operating costs • Technology can improve all aspect of customer relations, improving the accuracy and timeliness of trip information for consumers • Technology can reduce administrative burdens associated with tracking and verifying trips and improve efficiency when billing human service agencies for services provided under contract	• Some technologies are expensive to implement and require ongoing vendor maintenance and upgrade contracts • Integration of multiple technologies has proven difficult, even with general guidelines for an integrated architecture structure to ensure compatibility of technologies • Some users in the target populations may be reluctant to use an interactive information kiosk, automated telephone systems, etc.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Mobile Device Reservation Access

This strategy focuses on using technology for simplifying the process of reserving a trip on a demand-responsive rural transit system. The strategy proposes two technology driven methods for trip reservation:

Phase 1 - Sending Text to Agency for Reserving Ride: Currently, most rural transit providers use phone-call as a method to reserve rides for their demand-responsive transit service. Generally, the younger clientele is more likely to use other forms of communication (like text, online reservation, etc.) to make reservation. The concept proposes subscribing for text-to-email solution where the rider interacts with dispatcher using text and dispatcher interacts using email on the other end.

Phase 2 - Mobile Device Application: The University of Nebraska software development team is developing a mobile device application for making reservations for rural trips.

Needs Addressed
- Ability to Coordinate Transit for High Needs Riders /Patients (Non-verbal)
- Reduce Barriers to Contacting Providers

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Reduces after hours reservation barriers. • Supports non-verbal access to reservations	• Updates will require technical assistance by outside vendor • Limited to persons with mobile device.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Shared Management, Operations, and Administration

Management, operations, and administration of transit programs provide numerous opportunities for coordination, both between 5310 providers and within a regional structure.

Coordinating at the administrative level is a great strategy for solidifying early acceptance from transit providers who may otherwise be resistant to coordination. These activities include:

- Shared reporting: Coordinating reporting functions, may minimize paperwork for small 5310 agencies. In order to see the value of this coordination, agencies must use similar methods for reporting trips and costs. A shared dispatching program that has automated monthly and annual reports can save agencies time and money.
- Shared training: NDOT requires that providers be trained on the drug and alcohol program, blood borne pathogens and driving. Shared training provides group opportunities to complete training and testing.
- Shared maintenance: NDOT Transit, through FTA funding, has supported the construction of transit facilities throughout Nebraska. Developing shared maintenance agreements between smaller agencies and larger agencies with facilities is beneficial because the mechanics working on the vehicles will have specialized training and the federally funded assets will be receiving the highest use possible.
- Shared dispatching: Shared dispatching is the most often discussed method of operational coordination. NDOT has funded dispatching software and hardware throughout Nebraska, focusing on the 5311 network. There are many arrangements for shared dispatching that offer benefit while maintaining autonomy for a local provider (if that is a priority). The dispatching software being used in Nebraska is run through a "cloud based" network, which has the ability to allow satellite dispatching. In this type of scenario, the regional dispatcher is the keeper of the system, but smaller 5310 providers can do their own dispatching and scheduling locally. After the 5310 provider inputs trips, the regional dispatcher, with their access to all regional providers and their trips, can chain rides in order to provide the most efficient service. Doing this could also move service between the 5310 and 5311 programs, depending on availability. In Iowa, the coordinated districts receive money from all grant programs to provide general public transportation service – all users are eligible – and trips are dispatched based on the location of vehicles, not on client-type or eligibility criteria. Considering an option such as the Iowa model would take a change in the current 5310 market, but has the opportunity to make services more effective.
- Working regionally to identify all the needs and all the providers can help to determine the best way to serve trips. For example:
  - In rural areas, vehicles may be out of service all day for one person to go on a long distance trip for a medical service. This vehicle could serve dozens of people in one day locally. Are there volunteer driver programs that could support those long distance trips? If so, how can transit regularly connect individuals with volunteer drivers so that service is seamless?
  - A small town may have a taxi service but no interest in public transit. How can transit coordinate with this taxi service to allow riders to make connections regionally/locally and vice versa?
  - There may be a need for employer or education based service that is too expensive to serve, vehicles aren't available or isn't at the right time of day for transit. How can transit encourage other options, such as vanpooling and carpooling to show support of these needs?

By matching the level of need to the correct service type, transit capacity can be preserved for those with the most demand.

Needs Addressed

- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Large Employers, Medical Providers and Other Destinations
- Ability to Coordinate Transit for High Needs Riders / Patients
- Find Overlaps Between Human Service, Public Transit, and Target Population Transit Providers
- Identify Services and Capacity Available in the Region

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Reduces (potentially) costs to individual agencies • Enhances the ability to coordinate regional trips as all know schedule • Improves feasibility of short term vehicle sharing to cover for an unexpected maintenance issue • Potential for fewer missed trips if an agency can obtain loaner as others know maintenance schedule	• Reduced autonomy • Concern over less flexibility as need to work inside more structure • Must get over – We are the only ones that can help our folks • Maintenance may not be local – What happens when vehicle is out of service?
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Centralized Reservations and Dispatch

Coordinating dispatch and/or call centers involves creating a one-stop call-in number and using a single dispatching center to schedule requested rides among the available providers, vehicles or services. Providing consumers with one call-in number greatly increases customer convenience. To improve convenience may directly or indirectly include centralized Information and referral. Jointly scheduling trips also helps to organize trips efficiently and maximizes ride-sharing. Reducing individual trip costs means the ability to provide more rides to more people for the same amount of resources.

Needs Addressed
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Large Employers and Other Destinations
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Medical Providers and Other Destinations

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Enables passengers to make one call and access services provided by several providers • Improves productivity and efficiency with higher volumes and co-mingling of trips • Enables providers to schedule vehicles to fill service gaps.	• Determining which department will house technology and how to best share resource • Requires lead organization to take responsibility to house and pay for staff
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Shared Purchasing and Expansion of Capital Investment (Vehicles and Technology)

Human service agencies, through the 5310 program, provide critical access to programs and services and play a key role in ensuring mobility for persons with low income, older adults, and persons with disabilities. When coordinated with publicly provided transportation, human service agency transportation can reduce the overall demand for ADA complementary paratransit services. As capital acquisition is often undertaken from operating funding, the purchase of new or replacement vehicles is problematic for organizations facing fiscal constraints. The Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 Program is specifically designed to provide a source of capital funding for these organizations and will remain an important component in regional efforts to improve transportation services for the target populations.

Throughout Nebraska the state expands the federal capital investment program by providing provider agencies with operating stipends.

Relative to enhancing coordination, two important strategies are:
1. To ensure the continuation of Section 5310 funding for vehicles replacing older 5310-funded vehicles that are being retired.
2. Consider weighing more heavily in the funding selection applications that demonstrate new vehicles are to be used in a coordinated fashion (e.g., vehicle-sharing) and/or will otherwise meet a specific unmet need identified in the Coordinated Plan.

Needs Addressed
- Ability to Meet Current and Future Demand
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Human service organizations provide vital access to programs and services to members of the target populations who do not qualify for ADA complementary paratransit services • Capital funding supports maintenance of existing community transportation services • Section 5310 creates opportunities for funding partnerships with health and human service (HHS) programs, with FTA supplying capital funding and HHS providing vehicle operations support • Non-profit agencies can represent a cost-effective option for meeting some transportation needs of the target populations	• Funding available through the 5310 program (including capital and operating), may not be adequate for some agencies to afford providing service.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Centralizing Resources (Service Information, Reservations/Dispatch/Maintenance)

Centralized resource programs are designed to assemble information about available public, non-profit, and private sector transportation resources in a single location, source, or directory. In many communities, there are many available services for persons with low income, seniors, and persons with disabilities, but it is up to the consumer to find out hours and days of operation, service areas, availability, eligibility, and how to access such services. In a centralized resource directory, information regarding all available providers is assembled in a single place. The directory can be in written, published form or in a searchable online database format.

Needs Addressed

- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Large Employers, Medical Providers and Other Destinations
- Establish a Link Between Local Service and Inter-Regional Transit Service
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Ability to Coordinate Transit for High Needs Riders / Patients
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination
- Find Overlaps Between Human Service, Public Transit, and Target Population Transit Providers
- Finding Qualified Drivers

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Programs help reduce demand for paratransit services by increasing consumer knowledge in using and independently navigating the fixed-route system • Directories provide a "one-stop" resource for all public and private transit services and human service agency transportation • Directories provide easy contact and eligibility information enabling consumers and advocates alike to identify potential service providers for specific members of the target populations • Resource directories are readily embraced by most coordination committees as a nonthreatening strategy promoting enhanced mobility • Directories can be particularly useful in larger communities with multiple public and private sector transportation resources	• Requires a comprehensive data collection effort to create the directory • Keeping the directory up-to-date has proven problematic in some areas • A potential consumer education program of the directory existence is needed • Comprehensive directories may contain many listings, confusing consumers • Directories only alert consumers to the availability of a service provider; consumers and/or advocates must still inquire about eligibility and arrange for services
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Affordable and Accessible Taxi Services

Purchase of accessible vehicles (for example, ramp-equipped low-floor minivans or similar equipment) for taxi operators, with operators paying non-Federal share could supplement the existing ADA accessible public transportation fleet. This strategy could also include development/expansion of taxi subsidy programs designed to expand/supplement existing community and human service transportation networks.

Needs Addressed
- Address Insufficient Service Span with Evening and Weekend Gaps

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• More accessible taxi fleet • Source of service that could be used when fixed-route or demand-response services are not in operation • Source of service for trip types that are not eligible under other transportation programs • Could be used to complement taxi subsidy programs	• Taxi service is limited or not available outside metropolitan areas
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Expanded Service

Implement Mobility Manager Concept in Each Region

Mobility managers/coordinators are staff dedicated to promoting and improving mobility of residents and/or agency clientele. The Mobility Manager/Coordinator is responsible for coordinating transportation resources and providing public education regarding existing transportation resources. Mobility Coordinators also work to build awareness among decision makers, service providers, and riders on key issues related to the coordination of transportation and human services.

Individual mobility coordinators may be hired by a particular agency or may be shared among multiple agencies.

Mobility Coordinators typically:
- Serve as advocates for addressing the critical needs in transportation services to the general public and individuals with special needs
- Train agencies and individuals on local transportation options
- Develop and oversee outreach and education efforts on transportation resources

Needs Addressed
- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Large Employers and Other Destinations
- Establish / Continue Regular Communication Between Stakeholders in Region
- Address Policy Barriers in Service Crossing Jurisdictional Boundaries
- Coordinate Trip Scheduling with Medical Providers and Other Destinations
- Establish a Link Between Local Service and Inter-Regional Transit Service
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Finding Local Match Money, Educating Boards about Needs / Importance of Service / Sell Benefits
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination
- Promote the Benefit of Aging in Place

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
- Ensures staff resources are available to implement mobility and coordination strategies - Creates community resource to promote existing and available resources - Can highlight mobility challenges and opportunities and raise awareness - Implementing programs and creating awareness can result in improved effectiveness and efficiency	- Wholesale revisions to all system route and schedule information is expensive - Mobility Managers with full range of required skills may be difficult to find - Individuals will need to adopt an entrepreneurial approach and be well supported by key institutions and organizations to be effective - Individuals will likely need training and support - Requires matching funding from sponsoring agency
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Transit Service Expansion and Improvements

The benefits of service expansion provide opportunities for members of the target populations to access more support services and job opportunities, and be able to take more trips for shopping, recreation, social services and attend faith-based activities.

The most common types of service expansions include:
1. Expand the daily hours of service or days of week service is provided
2. Spatial expansion of service – expanding the service area for pick-ups and drop-offs, and/or adding destinations beyond the established pick-up area.

Needs Addressed
- Address Insufficient Service Span with Evening and Weekend Gaps
- Address Insufficient Geographic Coverage, access destinations outside the service area
- Ability to Meet Current and Future Demand
- Increased Number of Clients / Riders, More Destinations

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Enhanced customer accessibility, mobility and convenience. Opportunity to provide access to jobs that require work during non-traditional hours • Increased use of fixed-route services by the target populations and the general public	• Expanding service requires additional financial resources • Requires educating and training staff and customers to maximize benefits associated with cost
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Volunteer Driver/Escort Program

Volunteer drivers are individuals who, for no or a minimal cost, drive people who lack other mobility options. A sponsoring organization, such as a transportation provider, human service agency or other entity often helps match volunteer drivers with individuals who need rides. Volunteer drivers will typically use their private vehicle but will be reimbursed, usually based on mileage driven, by the sponsoring agency. Sponsoring agencies may also arrange for insurance coverage. Volunteer driver programs have proven to be an effective and important resource to help supplement community transportation programs.

Needs Addressed
- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Finding Qualified Drivers

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Provides low cost transportation option • Some programs will reimburse friends or family members for providing rides • Volunteers can provide a flexible source of transportation that can be useful for longer distance, out of area trips • Escorts can work to improve on-time performance when using existing public transit modes • Escorts are able to provide a higher level of passenger assistance than can be provided by public transit	• Some technologies are expensive to implement and require ongoing vendor maintenance and upgrade contracts • Setting up a volunteer driver network requires time and effort to recruit, screen, train and reward volunteer drivers • Riders need to be introduced to and appreciate concept of volunteer drivers • Real or perceived driver liability and insurance issues • Retention of volunteers can be an issue
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Marketing

Marketing/Branding/Outreach

Transit demand doesn't fall neatly into local or regional service areas. Creating a statewide marketing program that can then migrate to each region and to local providers will provide the continuity needed to best serve clients. The statewide program could include the following:

- A website that is map-based (expanded from what is currently offered by NDOT) that provides transit traveler information. This information would include the availability of service (by actual service area) and the parameters of that service. A phone number to the dispatch center would allow potential riders to easily book a ride. If the rider needs additional information, the contact information for the local mobility manager can also be provided.

- Another option for the statewide website/program would be to add transit to the existing 511 offerings. Multimodal 511 is a best practice offered in many urban regions across the country, but the concept can be tailored to a statewide implementation as well. The goal would be to allow a user to call 5-1-1 on any phone for all traveler information, whether they are a driver or a transit user.

The statewide program could integrate with a targeted local-level program that enhances ridership options as well as the potential transit offerings. Options for targeted marketing at the local and/or region level include:

- Providing fact-sheet type information that can be easily tailored by transit providers for use in their community.
- Offering sample marketing campaigns/presentations to encourage transit use and to encourage participation from the business/social service community.
- Coordinating strategies with non-public transit shared ride providers. Volunteer driver programs/Uber/Lyft/Taxi programs should be seen as partners, not competitors. Methods can be provided for including these providers in the system, and possibly partnering with them on more complex needs.
- Implementing new transit options, such as employment transportation. The marketing plan can include fact sheets and information on how employers can benefit from offerings vanpools and carpools or working with the public transit provider to subsidize services.
- Growing the service contract market: Service contracts are essential to grow the local match pool from the existing transit demand market. The marketing plan will provide a local user with methods for working with potential partners, getting them under contract and transitioning into operations smoothly.

The reasons for coordinating outreach and marketing regionally include:

- Limited local budgets: Most 5310 agencies do not have the funding available to focus on outreach and marketing of their transportation program.
- Focusing on transportation services: Most of the 5310 agencies are non-profit organizations that serve a mission other than transportation (aging and senior service organizations make up a large amount of the providers). Marketing and outreach that is implemented by the subrecipient will focus on the agency's menu of services and not solely transportation. Providing outreach and marketing at a regional level focuses the effort only on transportation services.
- Encourages new riders: As previously identified, most of the 5310 organizations serve a specific population. Marketing at the regional level will open services to eligible riders who are not current clients of the organization, but who could benefit from transportation services.

Needs Addressed
- Connect Local Service Area and Inter-Regional Transit Service
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Identify Services Available in the Region

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Promotes a combined effort where limited individual agency/location resources are leveraged to a greater extent • Allows local providers to spend more time on service rather than designing and implementing their own outreach. • Builds awareness of the concept through a coordinated branding process	• Does not completely replace local efforts. • Could be local concern that a common brand dilutes the unique nature of individual service agencies • Loss of autonomy (must collaborate on certain elements) • In many locations, any investment into marketing/branding is more than they are investing today
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Activate Statewide and Regional Coordinating Committee

Critical to observing benefits associated with the coordination investment of the Mobility Management design stage will be full activation of regional coordinating committees across the state and the statewide committee that provides the interagency connectivity.

The Mobility Management design stage document contains definition of the purpose and roles of both the regional and statewide committees, groups/organizations/agencies to involve in the committees and structures for involving each group in the coordination process. Additionally, how each committee would interact with mobility managers is outlined in the concept design document.

Needs Addressed
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Increase the Awareness of Transit Service
- Identify Services Available in the Region

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Facilitated broad engagement in coordination efforts across agencies and geographies of the state. • Broader support for the mobility management concept • Economically leverage expertise of various agency and provider staff. • Build support for local and state funding. • Grassroots advancement of coordination	• Time required to participate for small agencies that need to travel. • Changing historical ways of providing service in the state. • Stakeholders not understanding benefits.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed by Local Representatives)

Funding Enhancements

Services Clearinghouses and Shared Data

The central core of transit coordination is in information sharing, whether the information is about persons who are in need of a unique circumstance ride, about a FTA rule/process/policy, or what services the other agencies provide. Regional Coordinating Committee meetings create a perfect environment for information sharing between agencies or even person interested in gaining a better understanding of what services are available to partner with.

Understanding what service is available and accessible are critical inputs to allow one agency to work with their potential partners.

Creating a clearinghouse of information and distributing the information to each agency within a particular region and across the state will go a long way to making coordination more feasible. While the NDOT transit website contains basic information about providers, many of the details that are critical to supporting coordination are not provided. Most critical to the desired information are details about regional service such as schedules, routes, fares, etc.

Needs Addressed

- Assistance with Training / Managing Employees / Volunteers
- Establish / Continue Regular Communication Between Stakeholders in Region
- Finding Local Match Money, Educating Boards about Needs / Importance of Service / Sell Benefits
- Identify the Benefits of Coordination

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Enhances the ability to coordinate regional trips as all know the schedule • Allows creating a list of partners to help when the primary provider has vehicle or driver availability issue. • Supports agencies sharing information about partners if asked by a local customer in need of service in another nearby community.	• Most agencies do not have scheduled regional service. Thus, cannot provide a definitive schedule. • Keeping the information up to date will require time.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)

Convert Selected Regional Service to Intercity Feeder Service

A barrier to providing regional service (that brings access to medical service, expands shopping opportunities, and other activities in regional centers) is the high cost to small agencies for providing the service, even on a monthly basis. For many agencies, regional center service ties up a vehicle/driver for an entire day for trips that may carry one to six passengers.

By converting regional service funded under the 5311 program to 5311(f) feeder service, local match funding strapped agencies, communities, and counties can retain or expand regional service while removing the local cost burden.

The Intercity Feeder concept provides an opportunity for operators traveling to regional centers, with access to commercial air service, Amtrak, and/or long distance intercity carriers, the potential to transfer the local match for trips from the local jurisdiction to the NDOT.

Needs Addressed

- Expand access to regional centers.
- Reduce local cost burden
- Improve and Establish Inter-City Connections to Regional Center, Preserve In-Town Transit Services
- Establish a Link Between Local Service and Inter-Regional Transit Service

Potential Benefits	Potential Obstacles/Challenges
• Enhanced customer accessibility, mobility and convenience • Increase potential for small town seniors to age in place. • Allow smaller community agencies to save money or use more funding for local service.	• Limited number of regional centers meet definition of feeder service destination. • Controlling the addition of low productivity service by agencies when the NDOT supports the local match.
Potential Champion Organization(s)	(To be Completed with Local Representatives)